OF THE

FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

Written in Latine by

THOMAS A KEMPIS,
Canon Regular of the Order
of S. Auguſtine.

REVIEWED AND IN
diuers things corrected

By M. C. Confeſſor to the Engliſh
Nuns at Paris.

Who alſo added the Authours
life in this laſt edition.

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TO THE VERIE VENERABLE,

His much honored good Lady

MARIE TREDWAY

FIRST ABBESSE,

OF THE ENGLISH NVNNERY

of S. Auguſtin's Order, in Paris.

And to all the

RELIGIOVS DAMES

her pious and obedient

daughters.

THIS excellent booke of the following of Chriſt. which was compoſed 195. yeares agoe, by a brother of your owne: though it have ſerued for a preſent to almoſt all ſorts of people; and in all tongues none, as Sommalius witneſſeth

after the holy scripture, hauing bene so often reprinted: so often trãslated: so much desired; so frequently read: so highly and generally approued, by persons of euerie ranke) yet in my iugdment it was neuer by better right and title presented to any then to your selues: since it doth not so much need expresse dedication, as of it self without the endeauour of any, it doth addresse it selfe vnto you. For to whom should the Following of Christ belong, but to the Followers of Christ? And whom should we especially esteeme such, but those that imitating the young man in the Gospell, sell all that they haue to follow him? Those that with Abraham forsaking their contrie and friends, sacrifice their Isaac, that is, their self-loue or selfe-will, vpon the Calvarie of a religious life, one of the happie mountaines which God she

wed vnto them ?

Or who *can pretend iuſter title to a rich iewell left by a brother* who *dyed inteſtate, then legitimate ſuruiuing ſiſters ?*

Wherfor if any ſtriue to depriue you of title by fathering the worke *vpon ſome other Authour; vſe rather Preſcription againſt them, then proces: rather deſpiſe then diſpute their oppoſitions.*

Let Caietane, and his followers repute him Authour of ſo famous a booke, who, *as it ſhould ſeeme,* was *not yet reſolued how to* write *his owne name: vſing three,* Geſē, Geſſē, *and* Gerſen, *within ſo many lines.*

Let him imagine a man of all the three names (for that there was *any ſuch indeed it is verie vncertaine) and then trouble himſelfe in deriuing his pedigree from as many families as the ſuppoſed Authour had names,*

and as vnknowen to others, as the Authours name was to himselfe, to witt, Gessen, Gesse, Gessate, there being no such familie in Millan.

Let him be confident that his Authour was cited by S. Bonauenture (who liued long before Thomas a Kempis) in a worke which he neuer made: it nether being found in the Vaticane manuscript; nor in those of Columnia, Sforzia, or any other in any monasterie of S. Francis in Rome: nor yet in those of Bononia and Tolooſe.

But let Thomas a Kempis his owne word gaine credit with you written with his owne hand, as it is to be scene in the originall manuscript, in S. Martins Monasterie at Louaine, that he wrote this booke in the year 1441.

Let Iohn Busch confirme you in that beliefe who liued in the same age

and place, being onely a myle distant from S. Agnes wher Thomas liued, and wrote in the yeare 1446. some yeares before Thomas departed this life, professing that he writes nothing but what he was an eye and eare witnes of.

Adde to him Trithemius who wrote within 30. yeares after; and absolutly auerrs in his booke of the Ecclesiasticall writers of Germanie, that your Kempis is the Authour of it.

This doe to God's glorie, and in honour of that Apostlicall Order in which you run so well, so humbly, so succesfully: with such feruou such alacritie, such simplicity vnanimitie, peace, and cont. Where Obedience is precisly obserued, not proudly disputed: wher solide religion is substantially performed, not voyced, or set out with

a glorious outside, which is rather a hold for vaine glorie, then an ornament of religion, or of a religious woman, whose glorie ought to be within, *or if in any exteriour thing*, in her owne infirmitie *onely*, that the riches of Gods mercy *towards her* may more appeare in it. *It is to his honour that I giue testimonie to truth by speaking onely what I dayly heare and see. It is he that I admire and extolle in you, not you in your selues*, who of your selues are nothing: *though* in him that comforts you, *Christ*, you are nothing lesse then they that are *held* aboue measure *perfect. Your manly vertues outstripe your young yeares: your resolutions belying your sexes, make them appeare manly, yea Angelicall: your performances passe that* which man seeth in you, or heareth of you, *his, I meane,*

not yours, who gaue you both them, and the will to attempt things ſo heroicall. If I glorie, *you will pardon*, I am not foolish, I tell truth. My mouth is open to *you* deare ſoules, my hart is dilated, I ſpeake as to my children, *and remaine for euer.*

Yours, though vnworthy,
as Father and ſeruant.
M. C.

THE LIFE OF THOMAS A KEMPIS, CANON REGVLAR: DRAWEN OVT OF many authours.

THOMAS a Kempis, was borne at Kempis a litle towne in the territories and Dioceſe of Collen, whence alſo he tooke his name. If you behold his parents with a wordly eye, you will nether diſcouer them of

noble bloud, nor remarkable wealth; for all their nobilitie was pietie; all their reuenues honestie of life. They gayned their bread with the labour of their hands, and in the sweate of their browes, and liued contēt of the little they had.

God blessed their bed with two boyes onely, as far as can be gathered in the distance we liue from that age, to witt, Iohn, and Thomas. Iohn the elder brother, haueing finished his studies at Dauentrie: and by the fauour of Gerard the Greate his acquaintance and familiaritie, being instructed in all good demeanour; and hauing borne many offices in the order of the Canō Regulars of S. Windesems congregation, happily departed this life.

Now Thomas of whom we ſpeake, was borne about the 1380. yeare of our Lord God: Vrbane the ſixt holding the keyes, and Charles the fourth wealding the ſcepter of the Empire.

After he had paſt his childhood vnder his parents care; and grew vp to be fitt for learning, he was ſent to Dauentrie, the Metrapolitane citie of Tranſiſulana, being as one may gather about 13. yeares old. He was drawen to Dauentrie by the renowne of one Florentius a pious and learned prieſt, and Prefect of the Canon Regulars, whom the frequent troopes of ſtudents which came from thēce, had made famous. The ſtudies of Artes and Sciences did ſo florish there at that tyme, that it might be ſtiled the Belgike Athenes.

Being arriued at Dauentrie, his firſt care was to inquire for his brother, by whoſe counſell and helpe (for he had but litle or no meanes) he might be directed how to vndertake his ſtudies. And being commended to Mr Florentius (for Gerard the Great deceaſed in the yeare 2384. while our Thomas was but yet foure yeares old) he receaued him with all the humanitie poſſible; prouiding him of lodging, bookes, and liuelihood.

While the youth, who was of a good diſpoſition, and an honeſt countenance, had meanes by this occaſion to be conuerſant amõgſt famous men for pietie and learning, who liuing in the companie of Florentius, were adorned with religion, innocencie of life, and ſinceritie of demeanour: he was

ſeaſoned with their manners, with whoſe conuerſation he was delighted : being ſtudious at home: aſſiduous at ſchoole ; frequent at church. So that in a few yeares ſpace he made ſuch progreſſe in pietie and learning, as the many bookes , neuer ſufficiently prayſed, written by him, beare teſtimonie. While he liued in the Colledge of the Canon Regulars , whatſoeuer he could gaine by writing (for he was a skilfull pen - man) he putt it all into the common purſe.

He was a great ſeruant of our B. Ladies euen from his childhoode ſaying certaine ſett prayers euery day to her honour. But, as childrẽs pietie is alwayes mutable and inconſtant, he began to be cold in this pious cuſtome. So that by litle and litle he neglected and defer-

red his wonted prayers and ſuffrages, firſt to one day; ſoone after to two or three: then to foure: at lēgth to a whole weeke, and in the end, alas, he gaue ouer all. In the tyme of this his coldnes, he had a viſion by night wherin he conceaued himſelf to be, as it were, ſtanding in the hall by his maſter Florentius where, while: with other of his ſchoolfellowes who flocked together to heare the word of God, he attentiuly gaue eare to what was ſaid, the Lady of the world, diſcouered herſelfe vnto him cōming downe from heauen in a cloude and diſcending into the ſaid Hall, where being moſt glorious in her gracious aſpect or contenance, and glitttering in attire, she compaſſed the brothers who preached the word of God to the hearers,

and now imbracing one, now another of them, she seemed to render them thankes, that they endeauoured by wholsome admonition, to effect that the price of her deareſt ſonn's pretious bloud might not perish in thoſe young youthes. But he beholding what paſt: and ſeeing the Virgine bleſſed amongſt women, imbrace the foreſaid brothers, ſtood burning and ſweatning; melting and hopeing: and turning, and firmely fixing his eyes bige with loue, vpon her, he ſaid in himſelfe, I will a litle expect: that when the bleſſed Virgine shall haue ſufficiently giuen the teſtimonies of her loue to the reſt, she may alſo out of her benignitie daigne me with her charitable imbracements; whom, though I could not honour to her worth, yet I

endeauou-

endeauoured it according to my weaknes. But alas, as the firmeſt hopes of mortalls, are oftē anſwered with the contrarie; Thomas hoped for a kiſſe, a ſweet pledge of loue, but in lieu therof he mett with a sharpe reprehēſion. For the B. Virgine, hauing ſolaced all thoſe with deare imbracements, who with their pious admonitions did ſeaſon and ripen the florishing ſpring of the multitude of hopefull young youthes, she turned at length towards Thomas, and caſting a ſeuere and correcting eye vpō him. In vaine, quoth she, doſt thou expect the imbracemēt of ſacred loue: cruell enemy! who vnhappily neglecting my friendshipe, doſt not pay me the wonted and due reuenneus of thy feruent prayers. For where are now thy accuſtomed prayers? Whither are

thy daylie deuotions fled? What is now become of thy aſpiratiõs mixed with pious ſighes and teares? Is not charitie waxed cold in thee? Loue drowſie: wonted pietie shaken? And yet thou, as though to offend where nothing, ſtandſt audaciouſly expecting imbracemẽts, whoſe actiõs haue earned wroth. And wrothfully withdrawing her countẽnance: begone, quoth she, begone from me: thou art iudged vnworthy of my imbracements, who neglecteſt to pay ſo eaſie a tribute of prayers to thy beloued. And thus leauing him wounded with sharpe reprehẽſions, inuironed with clouds she diſappeared.

But Thomas awaking out of his viſion examines his conſcience, acknowledges his fault, and promiſes amendmẽt. And leaſt afterwards he might be fruſtrated of

the B. Virgini's imbracements, he did in ſuch ſort reſume his neglected deuotions, that he did not frõ that tyme to the verie laſt periode of his life euer omitt them any more! ô happie reprehenſion, which was forcible to correct errour; to renew the league of loue which was in ſome ſort violated; and to wipe away the ſtayne of negligence.

Being now much improued by ſeauen yeares acquaintance with Mr Florentius and the reſt of the bretheren, and hauing tryed himſelfe in all the parts and points of all the vertues, he was inflamed with a deſire of Religiõ, the ſparkes or ſeedes wherof Mr Florentius had caſt into his ſoule. Wherfore in the yeares 1400 in which yeare Florentius afterwards dyed, our Thomas be-

tooke himselfe to the holy mountaine of S. Agnes, situated a litle aboue the Citie of swollen, where, vpon the edge of the riuer Vidrũ, there was a monasterie lately begun of Canon Regulars, who liued vnder S. Augustins Rule and habit. This house was as yet (as the beginnings off all things are wont to be litle and difficult) verie obscure, being hardly knowen, and rarely frequented by any. When he came thither with commendatorie lettres from Florentius, he was verie courteously receaued of his owne brother, who was the first Priour of the said Monasterie; and both of them broke out into that heauenly acknowledgment: *how good and pleasant a thinge it is for brothers to dwell together.*

Now this candidate of religion, though he wonderfull feruently

desired to enter into it: yet least he might doe any thing too hastily or rashly, he moderated his feruour by a cõsiderate delay, which alone brings forth prudence. And therfor after he had spent 6. yeares in the nature of a scholler or prentise, the sixt yeare he receaued the habit, and at the end of the seauenth, he was solemnely professed. He did shine with a maruellous pietie towards God: obediẽce and obseruãce towards Superiours: loue and goodwill towards his fellow-brothers. He neuer gaue way to idlenes, the source of all mischiefe: but was continually imployed, ether in reading holy scriptures, transcribing them for the common vse; or in composing sõthing of his owne: wherin he did frequently spend what rested of the night after matins.

vea euen with damage to his bodily health, to th'end he might oblige all true louers of vertue.

The whole Bible deuided into foure tomes; a mightie faire masse-booke, and sundrie of S. Bernards, opuscules, or litle workes, are extant to this day, written by him most artificially, and industriously in an excellent hand.

It is hard to expresse how present he was to himselfe, and how reuerētly he performed the office of the Church, and all functions therto belonging.

While he sung the Psalmes, his aspect was alwayes turned toward the heauens inspired with feruent zeale, and taken with the incredible sweetnes of the Psalmes he was obserued to be rauished out of himselfe in an extasie, so that oftentymes he did not stand on

the ground with his heeles, but with his tip-toes onely touched it, ſtriuing to flie into heauen with the reſt of his body, wher he was already in hart and deſire. In ſinging he ſtood alwayes ſtraight vp, without euer leaning, ether with backe, or arme vpon his ſeate.

He was alwayes, day and night, the firſt that entred, and laſt that wēt out of the Church. The worſhipe of God, and the comlines of his houſe, did wōderfully delight, and dilate his hart.

So that while vpon a tyme one ſaid merrily vnto him, that he apprehended him happie indeed, and yet not much to be admired, that he ſung the Pſalmes with ſuch alacritie of voice, and prōptitude and pietie of mind; ſince Dauids Pſalmes were as ſauorie to him, as danitie ſamon; It is,

thãkes be to God, as thou ſayeſt, replyed he, *Pſalmi mihi Salmones*, which yet are tedious and loathſome to thoſe that are not preſent, and attentiue to what they ſing: but ſpare their breaſtes and voices.

All his diſcourſe was of God, and the holy ſcripture. When he chanced to be in the compagnie of graue and learned perſons, who ſpoke of court buſineſſes, and wordly affaires, he ſatt as dum, and ignorãt of all the things wherof they treated, not anſwering euen when he was demanded, vnleſſe he were inuited thervnto by ſome remarkable and apparent good. Marrie if there were ſpeach of God, and heauenly things, being demanded his opinion, he ſpoke, or rather wordes flowed from him, as continued

brookes ſweetly gliding from a cleare criſtall fountaine. When he was deſired to preach extemporally, ſo he could diſcouer any ones profit in it, he neuer refuſed: which yet he would not doe, till he had firſt premeditated for a ſmale ſpace, or tooke a short nappe. He had ſuch a faculty and facilitie in preaching, that verie many moued by the fame therof, flocked to the mount of S. Agnes out of the neighbouring townes and places more remote, with a greedines to heare him.

His companions did not leaſt admire his reſolute ſufferance, in ioyfully bearing aduerſities: his patience, not onely in eaſily tolerating but alſo benignly excuſing other mens faultes. His ſobrietie in all kindes; puritie of life, and modeſtie; his care and

diligence to aduance the profite of the communitie : his earneſt endeuour to ſee the Church beautified and adorned : his burning zeale as well as frequencie in his prayers : his teares plentifully powered out, and other moſt pregnant proofes of ſolide pietie. In fine he had conceaued ſo abſolute and inward a hatred of all worldly vanities, and allurements: and ſo holy a neglect of all tranſitorie things, that he lothed to learne the vſuall names by which they were called.

And leaſt while he preached well to others, his body which doth aggrauate the ſoule might haue led him captiue to ſin, and he haue become a reprobate, he chaſtiſed his body and brought it into captiuitie, diſciplining himſelfe with a whipe certaine dayes

in the weeke; ſinging in the interim *ſtetit Ieſus.*

He was ſo wedded to the reading of the holy ſcriptures, and to his celle, that he often both ſpoke and wrote this ſaying. *I haue ſought reſt in all things: yet neuer found it niſi in angellis & libellis*, that is, in retirednes and reading.

He was ſo affable and milde, that though he deſired much to flie it, yet was he choſen Subprior enen in the flowre of his age, by common ſuffrage. After that he was made Prefect of the economie, or Procuratour of the houſe, becauſe he ſeemed to be addicted to almes deedes, with which charge though he diligently complied; yet, becauſe it hindred him from his pious contemplation, and writing of bookes, he was reſtored to his former office.

It happened often that while he conuerſed and diſcourſed amõgſt his brethren, he perceaued God manifeſtly ſpeake interiourly to his hart; therfore modeſtly taking an excuſe as though he were expected by ſome, he repaired to his chamber: where powreing out his hart before God, he drunke vp that wiſdome, which all deuoute people admire in his moſt excellent bookes.

Our gracious Lord did alſo honour his ſeruant with a heauenly viſion: For while he went from the Mount of S. Agnes to viſite Iohn Heuſden Prior who lay ſicke at Windeſem, whether vpon courteſie, or occaſion; and conſulting with him about ſome buſines appertayning to religion, lodged there that night: He ſaw in the dawning of the day certaine reſ-

plendant troopes of bleſſed ſpirits running with nimble feete as though they haſtened to ſome great mans funerall, to conuoy his happie ſoule to their heauēly reſt. The truth which he ſaw, was made good by what he heard: for being wakened by the noyſe of the table he leepes out of bed, and hauing ſome ſenſe of what was to happē, he foretold the death of the Prior of Windeſem.

He learned by experience to deſpiſe the Diuells dreadfulnes and herrour. For when, vpō a certaine tyme, that foule beaſte ſtood about him in a moſt vglie and horred shape, and made towards his bed, he quaked at the firſt approch of that hideous aſpect, not knowing at what defence to put himſelfe againſt the guile of the dreadfull enemy of mankind. At

length encouraged by the holy Ghoſt, he begā as well as he could the Angelicall ſalutation, or aue Marie, with a trembling voice, as one in feare; But the diuell, as though he had not bene moued at all with that ſalutation, drew neerer and neerer vnto him quaking with feare, till he cryed out *Ieſus Chriſtus Amen.* Whervpon the diuell hearing that terrible name, ſtruke, as it were with a dreadfull thunder-bolt, turnd away his horrid conntenance, and fled away with ſpeed. Thomas therfore obſeruing that the Diuell durſt not ſtand againſt the vertue of ſo powerfull a name, reſumed courrage, rayſed his panting heart, and with iterated cryes proſecuted his flying enemy with the bleſſed name of *Ieſus Chriſt.* And euer as he redoubled his cryes: the foule fiēdre-

doubled his ſpeed. The bleſſed mā obſeruing this, rēdred thankes to God, and ſaid in himſelf: If by this moſt holy name, *Ieſus*, I be able to breake downe and vanquish the power of darknes, I will no more, as hertofore I haue done, ether feare their machinations, or through weaknes of faith, shake vnder their dreadfull minaces.

Yea thoſe other ſignes and miracles, which in diuers paſſages he relates were done by the payers of a perſon whom he names not: were firmly cōceaued to be done by his owne prayers: as that of the recouering of the booke which was loſt in the celle, and diuers other things.

He was of a litle more then a midle ſtature: of a manly shape and countenance: of a liuely browne colour: of a sharpe and

ſtrong ſight, ſo that euen to his graue he neuer vſed ſpectacles.

When he had moſt commendably, and with great frute to his fellowes, lead a religious life in the Mount of S. Agnes for the ſpace of 71. yeares (counting the fiue yeares which he ſpent there before he was clothed) he was ſummoned by his Lord and Sauiour to the Mount of Eternitie, which he had ſo oft before beheld at diſtance; ſo oft breathed after; and his bleſſed ſoule freed from her earthly priſon, did flit into the eternall tabernacles, there to inioy her God for euer. He dyed the 92. yeare of his age. The 8. of Aug. 1471.

FINIS.

THE

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

The first Booke.

Of the Imitation of Christ, and contempt of all the Vanities of the world.

CHAPT. I.

HE that followeth me, walketh not in darkneſſe, ſaith our Lord. Theſe are the words of Chriſt, by which we are admoniſhed, that we ought to imi-

tate his life, and manners, if we will be partakers of his diuine light, and be deliuered from all blindneſſe of hart. Let therfore our chiefeſt care be to meditate vpon the life of Ieſus Chriſt.

2. The doctrine of Chriſt exceedeth all the doctrine of the Saints: and he that had the light of ſpirit, would diſcouer therin a ſecret & hidden Manna. But it falleth out that many, who often heare the Ghoſpell of Chriſt, do yet feele in themſelues but ſlender motion of any holy deſire, becauſe they are void of the ſpirit of Chriſt. But whoſoeuer wil fully and feelingly vnderſtand the wordes of Chriſt, muſt endeauour to conforme his life wholy to the life of Chriſt.

3. What will it auaile thee, to diſpute profoundly of the

Trinity, if thou be voyd of humilitie, and therby be displeasing to the Trinitie? Highe wordes, surely, make a man neither holy nor iust; but a vertuous life maketh him deare to God. I had rather feele cõpunction, thẽ vnderstand the definition thereof. If thou dideſt knowe the whole Bible by harte, and the sayinges of all the Philosophers, what would all that profit thee, without charity, and the grace of God? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but only to loue God, & wholy to serue him. This is the higheſt wiſedome, by contempt of the worlde, to tend towards the Kingdome of heauen.

4. It is therfore vanity, to seeke after fading riches, and to repose truſt in them. It is also vanity, to gape after honours,

and to climbe to highe degrees. It is vanity to follow the appetites of the flesh; and to labour for that, for which thou must afterwardes suffer more grieuous punishmentes. Vanity it is, to wish to liue long, and to be careleſſe to liue well. It is vanity to minde only this preſent life, and not to foreſee thoſe thinges which are to come. It is vanity to ſett thy loue on that which ſpeedily paſſeth away, and not to haſten thither, where euerlaſting ioy is permanent.

5. Call often to minde the prouerbe: That the eye is neuer ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the eare filled with hearing. Endeauour therfore to withdraw thy hart from the affection of viſible things, and to turne thy ſelfe

the inuisible. For they that follow their sensuality, doe staine their owne consciences, & loose the grace of God.

Of the humble conceipt of our selues.

CHAPT. II.

ALl men by nature desire to know: but what auaileth knowledg without the feare of God? Surely, an humble husbandman that feareth God, is better then a proud Philosopher that neglecting himsefe, labou[r]eth to vnderstand the course of the heauens. Who so knoweth himselfe well, groweth daily more contemptible in his owne conceipit, and delighteth not in the praises of men. To be little esteemed of all thirty men.

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Of the humble conceipt of our selues.

CHAPT. II.

ALl men by nature desire to know: but what auaileth knowledg without the feare of God? Surely, an humble husbandman that feareth God, is better then a proud Philosopher that neglecting himsefe, laboureth to vnderstand the course of the heauens. Who so knoweth himselfe well, groweth daily more contemptible in his owne conceipit, and delighteth not in the praises of men. [illegible] stood all that

the world and were not in charity, what would that help me in the ſight of God, who will iudge me according to my deedes?

2. Giue not thy ſelfe to inordinate deſire of knowledg: for therin is much diſtraction and deceipt. The learned are willing to ſeeme ſo to others, and to be accompted wiſe There be many things, which to know doth little or nothing profit the ſoule: and he is very vnwiſe, that beſtoweth his labour about other thinges, then thoſe that may auaile him for the health of his ſoule. Many words do not ſatisfy the deſires of the harte: but a good life comforteth the mind, & a pure conſcience giueth great [illegible] in the ſight of God.

[illegible]ch the more thou [illegible] much the

better thou vnderſtandeſt, ſo much the more grieuouſly ſhalt thou therfore be iudged, vnleſſe thy life be alſo more holy. Be not therfore extolled in thy owne mind for any art or ſcience which thou knoweſt; but rather let the knowledge giuen thee, make thee more fearefull. If thou thinkeſt that thou vnderſtandeſt and knoweſt much; know alſo, that there be many things more, which thou knoweſt not. Thinke not too well of thy ſelf, but ratherconfeſſe thine ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thy ſelfe before others, ſith there be manie more learned & skilfull in the Law then thou? If thou wilt knowe or learne any thing profitable, deſire not to be knowne, but to be little eſteemed of by men.

4. The higheſt & moſt profitable reading, is the true knowledge and conſideration of our ſelues. It is great wiſdome and perfection, to eſteeme nothing of our ſelues, and to thinke alwaies well, and commẽdably of others. If thou ſhouldeſt ſee another openly ſinne, or commit any heynous offence, yet oughteſt thou not to eſteeme the better of thy ſelfe, for thou knoweſt not how long thou ſhalt be able to remaine in good eſtate. We are all frayle, but thou oughteſt to eſteeme none more frayle then thy ſelfe.

Of the doctrine of truth.

CHAPT. III.

HAppy is he whom Truth by it ſelfe doth teach, not

by figures, and voices that passe away; but as it is in it selfe. Our owne opinion and sense doth often deceaue vs, and it discernes little. What auaileth it to dispute and contend about darke and hidden things, wheras for being ignorant of them, we shal not so much as once be reprehended at the day of iudgment? It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and giue our minds to that which is curious and hurtfull: we haue eyes and doe not see.

2. And what haue we to do with the termes & distinctions of Logitians? He to whom the Eternall Word speaketh, is deliuered from multitudes and diuersities of opinions. By that one Word al thinges do speake, and all declare the same: and this

is the beginning, and that which ſpeaketh vnto vs. No man without that Word, vnderſtandeth or iudgeth rightly. He to whom all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and ſeeth all things in one, may enioy a quiet mind, and remaine peaceable in God. O God, the eternall Truth, make me one with thee in euerlaſting charity. It is tedious to me often to read & heare many things. In thee is all that I would haue, and can deſire. Let all Doctours hold their peace: let all creatures be ſilent in thy ſight: ſpeak thou alone vnto me.

3. How much the more one is retired within himſelfe, and becommeth inwardly ſincere, and pure: ſo much the more, and higher myſteries doth he vnderſtand without labour: for that he

receaueth light of vnderſtanding from aboue. A pure, ſincere and ſtayed ſpirit, is not diſtracted, though he be imploied in many workes: for that he worketh all to the honour of God, and laboureth for inwarde tranquillity, without ſeeking himſelfe in any thing he doth. Who hinders and troubles thee more, then the vnmortified deſires of thine owne harte? A good and deuout man, firſt of all diſpoſeth in himſelfe his outward works: neither do they draw him to the deſires of an inordinate inclination, but he ordereth them to the preſcript of reaſon. Who hath a greater combate, then he that laboureth to ouercom himſelf? This ought to be our endeauour, to conquer our ſelues daily, to wax ſtronger, and be more able to ſubdue our

paſſions, and alwaies in this way to get ſome ground.

4. All perfection in this life, hath ſome imperfections mixt with it: and no knowledge of ours is voide of darkneſſe, and ignorance. An humble knowledg of thy ſelfe is a more ſecure way to God, then a deepe ſearch after learning: yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the only knowledg of any thing whatſoeuer is to be diſliked, it being good in it ſelfe, and ordained by God: but a good conſcience, and a vertuous life, is to be preferred before it. And for that many endeauour, rather to gett knowledg, then to liue well, therfore they are often deceiued, and reape either none, or very ſlender profit of their labours.

5. O, if men beſtowed as

much labour in the rooting out of vices, & planting of vertues, as they doe in mouing doubts & queſtions, neither would there ſo much hurt be done, nor ſo great ſcandall be giuen in the world, nor ſo much looſnes be practiſed in places erected for vertue! Truly at the day of Iudgment, we ſhall not be examined what we haue read, but what we haue done: nor how wel we haue ſpoken, but how vertuouſlie we haue liued. Tell me now, where are all thoſe great Doctours and Maiſters, with whom thou waſt ſo well acquainted, whilſt they liued and flourished in learning? Now others poſſeſſe their liuings, & perhaps do ſcarce euer thinke of them. In their life time they ſeemed ſomthing, and now they are not ſpoken of.

6. O, how quickly doth the glory of this world paſſe away! Would God their life had bene anſwerable to their learning, then had their ſtudy and reading bene to good purpoſe. How many perish in this world by reaſon of vaine learning, who take little care of the ſeruice of God? And becauſe they rather chooſe to be great then humble: therfore they vanish away in their owne thoughts. He is truly great that is great in charity. He is truelie great, that is little in himſelfe, and that maketh no accompt of the hight of honour. He is truly wiſe, that accompteth all earthly thinges as dung, that he may gaine Chriſt. And he is truly learned, that fulfilleth the will of Chriſt, and forſaketh his owne.

Of

Of Prudence, and Foresight in our actions.

CHAPT. IV.

VVe must not giue eare to euery suggestion or instinct, but ought warily, & leasurely to ponder things according to the will of God. But (alas) such is our weakenesse, that wee rather often beleeue, and speake euill of others, then good. Those that are perfectly vertuous, do not easily giue credit to euery thing that is told them, for they know that humane frailty is prone to euill, and very subiect to faile in words.

2. It is great wisdome not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stifly in thine owne

conceipts; as alſo not to beleeue euery thing which thou heareſt: nor preſently to relate againe to others, what thou haſt heard, or doſt beleeue. Conſult with him that is wiſe and of a good conſcience, and ſeeke to be inſtructed by a better then thy ſelfe, rather then to follow thine owne inuentions. A good life maketh a man wiſe according to God, & giueth him experience in many things. How much the humbler one is in himſef, & more ſubiect & reſigned vnto God: ſo much the more prudent ſhall he be in all his affaires, and enioy greater peace and quiet of hart.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

CHAPT. V.

TRuth, not eloquence, is to be ſought for in holy Scriptures. Each part of them is to be read with the ſame ſpirit it was made. We ſhould rather ſearch after ſpirituall profit in Scriptures, then ſubtility of ſpeach. We ought to read deuout and ſimple bookes, as willingly as high and learned. Let not the reputation of the writer offend thee, whether he be of great or ſmall learning: but let the pure word of truth moue thee to read. Search not who ſpeakes this, or that, but marke what is ſpoken.

2. Men paſſe away, but the truth of our Lord remaineth for

euer. God ſpeaketh vnto vs ſundry waies, without reſpect of perſons. Our owne curioſity often hindreth vs in reading of the Scriptures, when as we will examine, and diſcuſſe that which we should rather paſſe ouer without more adoe. If thou deſire to reape profit, read humbly, plainly, and faithfully: neuer deſire the eſtimation of learning. Inquire willingly, & heare with ſilence the words of holy men: diſlike not the Parables of Elders, for they are not recunted without cauſe.

Of inordinate Deſires, and Affections.

CHAPT. VI.

VVhenſoeuer a man deſireth any thing inordinatly, he is

preſently diſquieted in himſelf. The proud and couetous can neuer reſt. The poore and humble in ſpirit, liue together in all peace. The man that is not wholy dead in himſelfe, is quickly tempted, and ouercome in ſmall and trifling thinges. The weake in ſpirit, and he that is yet in a māner ſubiect to his appetites, and prone to ſenſible things, can hardly withdraw himſelfe altogether from earthly deſires. And therfore he is often afflicted, when he goeth about to retire himſelfe from thē: and eaſily falleth into indignation, when any oppoſition is made againſt him.

2. And if he hath followed therin his appetite, he is preſently diſquieted with remorſe of conſcience, for that he yielded to his paſſion, which profiteth

him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for True quiet of minde therfore, is gottē by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the hart of a carnall man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spiritual and feruent.

Of flying vaine Hope, & Pride.

CHAPT. VII.

HE is vaine that putteth his trust in men, or creatures. Be not ashamed to serue others, for the loue of Iesus Christ: nor to be esteemed poore in this world. Presume not vpon thy selfe, but place thy hope in God. Doe what lieth in thy power, and God will assist thee. Trust

not in thine owne knowledg, nor in the wisdome or prudence of any liuing creature, but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the presumptuous and proud.

2. Glorie not in wealth, if thou haue it; nor in the power of thy friends, but in God, who giueth all things, and aboue all desireth to giue thee himself. Extoll not thy selfe for the stature, and beautie of thy body, which is dissolued, and disfigured with euery little sicknes. Take not pleasure in thy naturall gifts, or witt, least thereby thou displease God, to whom appertaineth all the good whatsoeuer nature hath giuen thee.

3. Esteeme not thy selfe better then others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who know-

eth what is in man, thou be accompted worse then they. Be not proud of thy good workes, for the iudgments of God are farre different from the iudgments of men, & that often offendeth him, which pleaseth them. If there be any good in thee', beleeue that there is much more in others, that so thou maiest the better keep within thy hart the precious treasure of humility. It is no preiudice vnto thee, to esteeme thy selfe worse then all the world: but it hurteth thee very much, to prefere thy selfe before any one. The humble enioy continuall peace but in the hart of the proud, is enuy and often indignation.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

CHAPT. VIII.

LAy not thy hart open to euery one: but treate of thy affaires with the wiſe, and ſuch as feare God. Conuerſe not much with young people, and ſtrangers. Flatter not the rich; neither do thou appeare willingly before great perſonages. Keepe company with the humble, ſimple, deuout, and vertuous; and confer with them of thoſe things, that may edify. Be not familiar with any woman, but in general commend all good women to God. Deſire to be familiar with God alone, and his Angells, and fly the knowledge of men.

2. We muſt haue charity towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that the fame of ſome perſon that is vnknowne, is much eſteemed; whoſe preſence notwithſtandinge is not grateful to the eies of the beholders We thinke ſometimes to pleaſe others by our company, and we rather diſtaſt them with our diſordered manners, and the euill cuſtomes which they diſcouer in vs

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Of Obedience, and Subiection.

CHAPT. IX.

IT is a great matter to liue in Obedience, to be vnder a Superiour, and not to be at our owne diſpoſition. It is much ſa-

fer to liue in the ſtate of ſubiection, then of gouernement. Many liue vnder Obedience, rather for neceſſity, then for charity: and ſuch are diſcontented, and do eaſily repine & murmure. Neither can they attaine to freedome of mind, vnleſſe they willingly and hartily put themſelues vnder Obedience for the loue of God. Go whither thou wilt, thou ſhalt find no reſt, but in humble ſubiection vnder the gouernment of a Superiour. The imagination and change of places, haue deceiued many.

2. True it is, that euery one willingly doth that which agreeth with his owne ſenſe and liking; and is apt to affect thoſe moſt, that are of his owne mind: But if God be amongſt vs, we muſt leaue our owne iudgment,

that ſo peace and ſweetnes may be the better preſerued. Who is ſo wiſe, that he can fully know all thinges? Truſt not therefore too much to thine owne conceipts: but be willing to heare the iudgment of others. If that which thou thinkeſt, be good, and notwitſtanding doſt leaue it for God, and followeſt the opinion of another, it shal be better for thee.

3. I haue often heard, that it is more ſecure to heare and take counſell, then to giue it. It may alſo fall out, that each ones opinion may be good: but to refuſe to yeelde to others, when as reaſon, or cauſe requireth it, is a token of wilfullnes and pride.

Of the auoyding ſuperfluity of wordes.

CHAPT. X.

FLy the vnquietnes of men as much as thou canſt, for the talke of worldly affaires hindreth very much, although they be recounted with ſincere intention: for we are quickly defiled, and as it were enthralled with vanity. I could wish that I had often times held my peace, when I haue ſpoken: and that I had not bene in company. Why do we ſo willingly ſpeake, and talke with one another, when notwithſtanding we ſeldom returne to ſilence, without hurt of conſcience? The cauſe wherfore we ſo willingly talke, is, for that

by diſcourſing one with another, we ſeek to receaue comfort one of another, & deſire to eaſe our mind, ouer wearied with ſundry thoughts: and we talke willinglie, and thinke of thoſe thinges which we loue beſt, and moſt deſire; or of thoſe, which we feele moſt contrary vnto vs.

2. But alas, often times in vaine, and to no end: for this outward comfort, is cauſe of no ſmall loſſe of inward, and diuine conſolation. Therfore we muſt watch and pray, leaſt our time paſſe without any fruit or profit. If it be lawfull, and expedient for thee to ſpeake; ſpeake thoſe things that may edify. An euill cuſtome, & neglect of our owne good, doth very much ſlacke the raynes to inconſiderate ſpeach: Yet deuout diſcourſes of hea-

uenly things, do greatly further our progresse in spirit, especially where persons of one minde and spirit be gathered together in God.

Of the obteyning of peace, and zeale of spirituall profit.

CHAP. XI.

VVe might enioy peace, if we would not busie our selues with the words and deedes of other men, which appertaine nothing to our charge. How can he liue long in peace, that thrusteth himself into the cares of others, or that little or seldome recollecteth himselfe within his own brest? Blessed are the simple and pure minds, for they shall enioy much peace.

2. What is the reaſon, why ſome of the Saints were ſo perfect, and contemplatiue? Becauſe they laboured to mortify themſelues wholy to earthly deſires; and therefore they could with their whole hart, giue themſelues to God, and freely attend to their owne affaires. We are too much ledde by our owne paſſions, and too ſolicitous for tranſitory thinges. We alſo ſeldome ouercom any one vice perfectly, nor are we inflamed with a feruent deſire to profit in ſpirit: and therfore we remaine cold in deuotion, and full of tepidity.

3. If we were perfectly dead vnto our ſelues, and not intangled within our owne breaſts, then we might alſo haue ſome taſt of diuine thinges, and feele the ſweetneſſe of heauenly con-

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templation. The greateſt, and indeed the whole impediment is, for that we are not free from our paſſions, & diſordered inclinations: neither do we endeuour to enter into the path of perfection, which the Sainres haue walked before vs: and when any ſmall aduerſity befalleth vs, we are too quickly deiected, and turne our ſelues to human comforts.

4. If we endeauoured like men of courage, to ſtand continually in the battaile, ſurely we ſhould feele the fauourable aſſiſtance of God from heauen. For he who giueth vs occaſion to fight, to the ēd we may get the victory, is ready to ſuccour thoſe that fight manfully, and do truſt in his grace. If we eſteeme our progreſſe in Religious life, to conſiſt only in

theſe exteriour obſeruations, our deuotion will quickly be at an end. Let vs ſet the axe to the roote, that being freed from paſſions, we may enioy true peace of mind.

5. If euery yeare we would roote out one vice, we should quickly become perfect men. But now often times we perceaue it goeth contrary, & that we were better, and of a more pure conſcience at the beginning of our conuerſion, then after many yeares of our profeſſion. Our feruour and profit should increaſe daily; but now it is accompted a great matter, if one can retaine but ſome part of his firſt ſpirit. If we would vſe but a little violence in the beginning, then should we be able to performe all things afterwards with eaſe and ioy of hart.

6. It is a hard matter to leaue that to which we are accuſtomed; but harder to do againſt our owne wils. But if thou doſt not ouercome little and eaſy things; how wilt thou ouercome harder matters? Reſiſt thy inclination in the firſt motions, and breake off euill cuſtomes, leaſt perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty. O, if thou dideſt conſider how much inward peace vnto thy ſelfe, and ioy to others thou shouldeſt procure by demeaning thy ſelfe well, I ſuppoſe thou wouldeſt be more carefull of thy ſpirituall profit.

Of the profit of Aduerſity.

CHAP. XII.

IT is good that we haue ſometimes griefe and aduerſities:

for they often make a man enter into himſelfe, & remember that he is heere in banishment, and ought not to place his truſt in any worldly thinge. It is good that we be ſometimes contradicted, and that there be an euill or hard conceipt had of vs: and this, although we doe, & intend well. Theſe thinges helpe often to the attaining of humility, and defend vs from vaine glory: for then we chiefly ſeeke God for our inward witneſſe, when outwardly we be contẽned by men, and when there is no credit giuen vnto vs.

2. And therfore a man should ſettle himſelfe ſo fully in God, that he needed not to ſeeke manie confortes of men. When a good and vertuous man is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with

euill thoughtes, then he vnderstandeth better the great neede he hath of Gods assistance without whose helpe he perceaueth he can do nothing that is good. Then also he sorroweth, lamenteth, and prayeth for the miseries he suffereth. Then is he wearie of liuing longer, and wisheth that death would come, that he might be dissolued, and be with Christ. Then also he well perceaueth, that complete security, and perfect peace, cannot be had in this world.

Of resisting Temptation.

CHAP. XIII.

SO longe as we liue in this world we cannot be without tribulation and temptation: for

as it is written in Iob: Temptation is the life of man vpon earth. Euery one therfore ought to be careful,& diligently to arme himself with praier against his temptations, least the Diuell find time and place to deceaue him, who neuer sleepeth, but goeth about seeking whom he may deuoure. No man is so perfect and holy but hath sometimes temptations: & we cannot be altogether free from them.

2. Temptations are often profitable vnto men, though they be troublesome, and grieuous: for in them man is humbled, purged, and instructed. All the Saints haue passed and profited through many tribulations and temptations; and they that could not beare temptations, became reprobate and fell from God.

There is no order ſo holy, nor place ſo ſecret, where there be not temptations or aduerſities.

3. There is no man that is altogether free from temptations, whileſt he liueth on earth, for in our ſelues is the cauſe therof, being borne with inclination to euill. When one temptation or tribulation goeth away, another commeth: and we shal euer haue ſomething to ſuffer, becauſe we haue loſt that innocency with which we were created. Many ſeeke to fly temptations, and do fall more grieuouſly into them. By flight alone we cānot ouercome; but by patience and true humilitie, we become ſtronger then all our enemies.

4. He that only auoideth them outwradly, and doth not plucke them vp by the roote, shall pro-

fit little: yea temptation will the ſooner returne vnto him; and he shall feele himſelfe in worſe caſe then before. By little and little, and by patience with longanimity (through Gods helpe) thou shalt more eaſily ouercome, then with violence, and thine owne importunity. Often take counſell in temptations, and deale not roughly with him that is tempted; but giue him comfort, as thou wouldſt wish to be done to thy ſelfe.

5. The beginning of all euill temptations, is inconſtancy of mind, & litle confidence in God: for as a ship without a ſterne is toſſed to and fro with the waues; ſo the man that is negligent, and leaueth his purpoſe, is many waies tempted. Fire trieth iron, and temptation a iuſt man. We

know not oftentimes what we are able to doe, but temptations doe shew vs what we are. We must be watchfull, especially in the beginninge of the temptation, for the enemy is then more easily ouercome, if he be not suffered to enter the doore of our harts, but be resisted without the gate, at his first knocke. Wherfore one said: Withstand the beginnings, for an after-remedy comes often too late. First there commeth to the mind an euill thought, then a strong imagination therof, afterwards delight, and an euill motion, and then consent: and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth full entrance, whilst he is not resisted in the beginning. And how much the longer one is negligent in resisting: so much

weaker doth he become daily, and the enemy ſtronger againſt him.

6. Some ſuffer greateſt temptations in the beginning of their conuerſion: others in the latter ende; others againe are much troubled almoſt through the whole time of their life. Some are but eaſily tempted according to the wiſedome, and equity of the diuine appointment, which weigheth the ſtate and deſerts of men: and ordaineth all things for the ſauing of his elect and choſen ſeruants.

7. We ought not therfore to deſpaire when we are tempted; but ſo much the more feruently to pray vnto God, that he will vouchſafe to help vs in al tribulation, who ſurely according to the ſaying of S. Paul, will make

with temptation ſuch iſſue, that we may be able to ſuſtaine it. Let vs therfore humble our ſelues vnder the hande of God in al temptations and tribulations; for he will ſaue, and exalt the humble in ſpirit.

8. In temptations and afflictions man is proued how much he hath profited; and his merit is therby the grater before God, and his vertues do more openly appeare. Neither is it any great matter if a man be deuout and feruent, when he feeleth no heauines: but if in time of aduerſity he beare himſelfe patiently, there is hope of great good. Some are kept from great temptations, and are often ouercome in ſmall ones, which do daily occure; to the end that being humbled, they may neuer

preſume on themſelues in great matters, who in ſo ſmall things do ſee themſelues ſo weake.

Of auoyding rash Iudgement.

CHAPT. XIV.

TVrne thine eies vnto thy ſelfe, and beware thou iudge not rashly the deeds of other men. In iudging of others a man alwaies laboureth in vaine, often erreth, and quickly ſinneth; but in iudging and diſcuſſing of himſelfe, he alwaies laboureth fruitfully. We often iudg of things according to our owne deſire; for priuate affection bereaues vs eaſily of true iudgement. If God were alwaies the pure intention of our deſire, we ſhould not be ſo much troubled

with the repugnance of our ſenſuality.

2. But oftentimes ſome inward ſecret inclination, or outward affection occureth, which draweth vs after it. Many ſecretlie ſeeke themſelues in their actions, and knowe it not. They ſeeme alſo to liue in good peace of mind, when things are done according to their will, and opinion; but if it ſucceed otherwiſe then they deſire, they are ſtraightwaies troubled, and much afflicted. The diuerſities of iudgments and opinions, cauſe oftentimes diſſentions betweene religious and deuout perſons.

3. An old cuſtome is hardly broken, and no man is willingly led further then himſelfe liketh. If thou doſt more rely vpon thine owne reaſon or induſtry, then

vpon the vertue of obedience to Ieſus Chriſt, it wilbe long before thou be illuminated with grace, for almighty God will haue vs perfectly ſubiect vnto him, and that we tranſcend the narrow limits of humane reaſon, enflamed with his loue.

Of Workes done out of Charity.

CHAP. XV.

FOr no worldly thing, nor for the loue of any man, is any euill to be done: but yet for the profit of one that ſtandeth in neede, a good worke is ſometimes to be left off, or changed alſo for a better. For by doing this, a good worke is not loſte, but changed into another of greater merit. The exteriour work without charity, profiteth

nothing; but whatsoeuer is done of charity, be it neuer so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, it is fruitfull, and of great esteeme in the sight of God. For God weigheth more with how much loue one worketh, then how much he doeth. He doth much, that loueth much.

2. He doth much that doth a thing well: he doth well that rather serueth the common good of others, then his owne will. Oftentimes it seemeth to be charity, and it is rather carnality: because naturall inclination, selfe-will, hope of reward, and desire of our owne commodity, will seldome be wanting.

3. He that hath true and perfect charity, seeketh himselfe in nothing; but only desireth in all thinges that the glory of God

should be exalted. He alſo enuieth none, becauſe he loueth no priuate good, nether wil he reioyce in himſelfe, but wisheth aboue al things to enioy God. He attributeth nothing that is good to any man, but wholy referreth it vnto God, from whō, as from the fountaine all things proceed: in whom finally all Saints haue perfect reſt, by fruition of his glory. O he that had one ſparke of perfect charity, how eaſily would he diſcerne, that all earthly things be full of vanity!

Of bearing with the defects of others

CHAP. XVI.

THoſe things that a man cannot amend in himſelfe or in

in others, he ought to ſuffer patiently, vntill God ordaine otherwiſe. Think that perhaps it is better ſo, for thy tryall and patience, without which our merits are not much to be eſteemed. Thou oughteſt to pray notwithſtanding, when thou haſt ſuch impediments, that God would vouchſafe to help thee, and that thou maiſt beare them patiently.

2. If one that is once or twice warned doth not amend, contend not with him, but commit all to God, that his will may be fulfilled, and his name honoured in all his ſeruants, who knoweth how to turne euill into good. Endeauour to be patient in bearing with the defectes and infirmities of others: for that thy ſelf alſo haſt many things which muſt be ſuffered by others. I

thou canſt not make thy ſelfe ſuch an one as thou wouldeſt, how canſt thou expect to haue another in all thinges to thy liking? We would willingly haue others perfect, & yet we amend not our owne faults.

3. We will haue others ſeuerely corrected, and will not be corrected our ſelues. The large liberty of others diſpleaſeth vs: and yet we will not haue our deſires denied vs. We will haue others kept vnder by rigorous lawes, but in no ſort will we our ſelues be reſtrained. And thus it appeareth, howe ſeldome we weigh our neighbour in the ſame ballance, with our ſelues. If al men were perfect, what should we haue to ſuffer of our neighbour for God?

4. But now God hath thus

ordained, that we may learne to beare one anothers burden, for no man is without defect, no man without burden, no man ſufficient of himſelfe, no man endued with ſo much wiſdome as he needeth: but we ought to beare with one another, comfort one another, helpe, inſtruct, and admonish one another. Aduerſity beſt deſcouereth how great vertue each one hath: for occaſions make not a man fraile, but do shew what he is.

Of Religious life.

CHAP. XVII.

THou muſt learne to breake thy owne will in many thinges, if thou wilt haue peace, and concord with others. It is

no ſmall matter to dwel in community, or in a congregation, and to conuerſe therin without complaint, and to perſeuer there faithfully vntill death. Bleſſed is he that hath there liued well, and ended happily. If thou wilt perſeuer in grace as thou oughteſt, and profit in vertue, eſteeme thy ſelfe as a banished man, and a pilgrim vpon earth. Thou muſt be contented for the loue of Chriſt, to be eſteemed as a foole in this world, if thou deſire to lead a vertuous, and perfect religious life.

2. The wearing of a religious habit, and shauing of the crown, do little profit; but chang of manners, and perfect mortification of paſſions, make a true religious man. He that ſeeketh any thing elſe but God, and the health of

his ſoule, ſhall find nothing but tribulation and ſorrow. Nether can he remaine long in peace, that laboureth not to be in the meaneſt place, and ſubiect to all.

3. Thou camſt to ſerue, not to be ſerued. Know that thou waſt called to ſuffer and to labour; not to be idle, or to ſpend thy time in talke. Here in the ſchoole of Chriſt, men are proued as gold in the fornace. Here no man can ſtand, vnleſſe he humble himſelf with his whole hart, for the loue of God.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

CHAP. XVIII.

CONſider the liuely examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection and religion ſhined; and thou ſhalt ſee

how little it is, and almoſt nothing which we do now in theſe daies. Alas, what is our life if it be compared to them? The Saints and friends of Chriſt ſerued our Lord in hunger and thirſte, in cold and nakedneſſe, in labour and wearines, in watching and faſting, in prayer and holy meditations, in perſecutions and many reproaches.

2. O, how many and grieuous tribulations ſuffered the Apoſtles, Martyrs, Confeſſours, Virgins, and all the reſt that endeauoured to follow the ſteps of Chriſt! They hated their liues in this world, that they might poſſeſſe their ſoules in euerlaſting life. O, How ſtrict and poore a life, led the holy Fathers in the wildernes! How long and grieuous temptations ſuffered they!

they, yea and how grieuously were they assaulted by their Ghostly enemy! How feruent praiers offered they daily to God! How rigorous abstinence did they vse! How feruent zeale, and care had they of their spirituall profit! How strong, and continuall a combat had they for the ouercomming of vices! How pure and vpright intentions kept they vnto God? In the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continuall prayer, although when they laboured also, they ceased not from mentall prayer.

3. They spent all their tyme with profit: euery houre seemed short for the seruice of God, and for the great sweetnes they had in contemplation, they forgot the necessity of corporall refec-

tion. They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends and kinsfolkes; they desired to haue nothing which appertained to the world; they scarce took thinges necessary for the sustenance of life; they grieued to serue their bodies euen in necessity. They were poore in earthly thinges, but rich in grace & vertues. Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were replenished with grace, and spirituall cõfort.

4. They were strangers in the world, but neere and familiar friends to God. They seemed to themselues as nothing, and abiect to this world: but they were precious, & beloned in the eyes of God. They were grounded in true humility, liued in simple obedience, walked in charity & patience: and therfore they pro-

fited daily in ſpirit, and obteined great grace in, Gods ſight. They were giuen for an example and patterne of perfection in Gods Church, & their example should more ſtyr vs vp to a deſire of our ſpirituall profit, then the number of the lukewarme and diſſolute liuers, draw vs to the neglect therof.

5. O, how great was the feruour of all religious perſons in the beginning of their holy Inſtitution? How great was their deuotion to prayer? How diligent emulation of vertue? How exact diſcipline florished? How great reuerence and obedience, vnder the rule of their Superiour, obſerued they in all thinges? Their footſteps yet remaining doe teſtify, that they were indeed holy and perfect men: who fighting

ſo valiantly, trode the world vnder their feet. Now he is greatlie accompted of, that breaketh not the rule, and that can with patience endure that which he hath profeſſed,

6. O coldnes and negligence of our times, that we ſo quickly decline from our firſt feruour, and are come to that paſſe, that very ſlouth and coldnes of ſpirit, makes our owne liues tedious vnto vs. Would to God the deſire to profit in vertue, did not wholy ſleepe in thee, who haſt often ſeene the holy examples of deuout and religious ſoules.

Of the Exerciſe of a good, and Religious perſon.

CHAP. XIX.

THe life of a Religious perſon, ought to ſhine, with all

vertues: that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seemeth to men. And with reason thou oughtest to be much more within, then is perceaued without: for God beholdeth the hart, whom we ought most highly to reuerence whersouer we are: & walke in purity like Angels in his sight; and to renew daily our purposes, and styrr vp our selues to feruour, as though this were the first day of our conuersion; and to say: Helpe me, my God, in this my good purpose; and in thy holy seruice; and graunt that I may now this day begin perfectly, for that which I haue done hitherto, is nothing,

2. According to our purpose, shal be the successe of our profit: and much diligence is necessary to him, that will profit much.

And if he that firmly purpoſeth, often faileth, what ſhall he doe, that ſeldome purpoſeth anye thing, or with little certainty? It may fall out ſundry waies, that we leaue off our purpoſe: and if for light occaſions we omit our accuſtomed exerciſes, it ſeldome paſſeth without ſome loſſe. The purpoſe of iuſt men, is rather grounded vpon the grace of God, then on their owne wiſdome, in whom alſo they alwaies haue confidence, in whatſoeuer they take in hand. For man doth purpoſe, but God diſpoſeth: neither is the way of man in his owne hands.

3. If an accuſtomed exerciſe be ſometimes omitted for ſome worke of charity, or of intention to profit our neighbour, it may eaſily afterward be reco-

uered : but if it be lightly left, through inconſtancy or negligence, it is an offence, and will proue hurtfull. Though we endeauour what we can, yet shall we faile in many things. But yet we muſt alwaies purpoſe ſomthing certaine, eſpecially againſt that which moſt hinders vs. We muſt examine well, and order both our exteriour and interiour actions; for that both are expedient for our progreſſe in vertue.

4. If thou canſt not alwaies recollect thy ſelfe, yet do it ſomtimes, and that at leaſt once euery day; to wit in the morning, or euening. In the morning make thy good purpoſe; in the euening examine thy ſelfe what thou haſt bene that day in word, deede, or thought: for that in theſe oftentimes perhaps thou

haſt offended God, & thy neigh-
bour. Arme thy ſelfe with cou-
rage againſt the malicious at-
tempts of thine enemy. Re-
fraine Gluttony, and thou ſhalt
more eaſily bridle all the diſor-
dered inclinations of the fleſh.
Neuer be altogether idle, but
either reading, or writing, or
praying, or meditating, or labou-
ring ſomthing of profit for the
common good: but bodily exer-
ciſes are to be diſcreetly vſed, &
not to be vndertaken equally of
all.

5. Thoſe things that be not
common, are not to be done in
the ſight of al, for priuate things
are beſt done in ſecret. But thou
muſt beware, thou neglect not
that to which thou art bound
by common rule, and be ready
in performing thy priuate deuo-

tions: but hauiug fully and faithfully accomplished all thy duties, and thoſe things that were enioyned thee, if thou haſt further leaſure, returne to thy ſelfe as thy deuotion deſireth. All cannot vſe the ſame exerciſe, but one is more conuenient for this perſon, another for that. According to the diuerſity of times alſo, diuers exerciſes are fitting; for ſome ſuite better with feſtiuall dayes, others with daies of labour. We haue need of one kinde in temptations, and of others in time of peace, and quiet. We deſire to thinke of other things, when we are ſorrowfull, then we do when we are cheerfull in our Lord.

6. When principall feaſts draw neere, good exerciſes are to be renewed; and the interceſ-

ſions of Saints more feruently to be implored. From feaſt to feaſt, we should make ſome good purpoſe, as though we were then to depart out of this world, and to come to the euerlaſting feaſts of heauen. And therfore we ought to prepare our ſelues carefully at holy times, & to liue more deuoutly, & to keep more exactly all things that we are to obſerue, as though shortly we were to receaue reward of our labour at Gods hands.

7. And if it be differred, let vs think that we were not well prepared, nor worthy as yet of ſo great glory, as shall be reuealed in vs at the time appointed: and let vs labour to prepare our ſelues better for our departure. Bleſſed is that ſeruant (ſayth S. Luke the Euangeliſt) whom when

when his Lord commeth, he shall finde watching: verily I say vnto you, he shall place him ouer all that he possesseth.

Of the loue of solitude, and Silence.

CHAPT. XX.

SEeke a fit time to attend to thy selfe, and often thinke of the benefits of God. Leaue curious things. Read ouer such matters, as may cause rather compunction, then the labour of much study. If thou withdraw thy selfe from superfluous talke, and idle wandring about, as also from hearing of newes and tales, thou shalt find sufficient, and fit time to thinke of good things. The greatest Saints auoided the company of men as

much as they could, & chose to liue to God in secret.

2. One said: As often as I haue bene amongst men, I haue returned lesse man. The same we finde by experience when we talke long. It is easier to keep silence altogether, then not to exceede in words. It is easier for a man to keepe at home, then to demeane himselfe as he ought in all things abroad. He therfore that desireth to attaine to internall, and spirituall graces, ought with Iesus, to withdraw himselfe from the people. No man goeth safely abroad, but he that gladly keepeth home. No man securely gouuerneth, but he that delighteth to liue in subiection. No man securely commandeth, but he that hath learned readily to obey.

3. No man ſecurely reioyceth, vnleſſe he hath within him the teſtimony of a good conſcience. And yet the ſecurity of Saints, was alwaies full of the feare of God. Nether were they leſſe carefull and humble in themſelues, for that they shined outwardly with grace, & great vertues. But the ſecurity of euill mē riſeth of pride and deceaueth them. Neuer promiſe to thy ſelfe, ſecurity in this life, although thou ſeeme to be a good Religious man, or deuout Hermite.

4. oftentimes thoſe, who in the iudgment of men were of better eſteeme, haue bene in greateſt danger, by reaſon of their too much confidence. Wherfore it is more profitable to manie, not to be altogether free from temptations, but to be often aſ-

saulted, least they should be too secure, and so perhaps be lifted vp in pride: leastalso they should too freely giue themselues to outward comforts. O, how good a conscience should he keep, that would neuer seeke transitory ioy: would neuer busy himselfe with the thinges of this world: & how great peace and quietnes should he possesse, that would put off all vaine solicitude, and only thinke of diuine thinges, and such as are profitable for his soule, and place all his hope in God!

5. No man is worthy of heauenly comfort, vnlesse he haue diligently exercised himselfe in holy compunction. If thou desirest true contrition of hart retire thy selfe into some secret and solytary place, and exclude

from thy mind the tumults, and vnquietnes of the world, as it is written: In your chambers be yee sory. In thy Cell thou shalt find that, which abroad thou shalt often loose. The Cell, if thou continue in it, waxeth sweet, & if thou loue not to stay in it, it becometh irksome, If in the beginning of thy conuersion, thou accustome thy self to remaine in it, & keep it well, it wil be afterwards vnto thee a deare friend, and a most pleasant comfort.

6. In silence and quietnes, a deuout soule perfecteth her selfe, and learneth the secrets of holy Scriptures. There she findeth flouds of tears, with which she may euery night wash and cleanse her selfe, and be made so much the more familiar with her Creator, by how much the

further of she liueth from all worldly disquiet. Who so therfore withdraweth himself from his acquaintance and friends, God with his holy Angels, wil draw neere vnto him. It were better for a man to lye hidden, & haue care of himself, thē being careleſſe of his ſoule, to worke miracles in the world. It is commendable for a Religious perſon to goe abroad ſeldome, to fly to be ſeene, and to be vnwilling to ſee men.

7. Why wilt thou ſee that, which is not lawfull for thee to haue. The world paſſed away, and all its delights. The deſires of our ſenſuality, drawe vs to walke abroad, but when the loue is paſt what bringeſt thou home, but a burdened conſcience, and diſtracted thoughts?

A ioyfull going abroad, bringeth often a sorrowfull comming home, & a merry euening makes a sad morning. So all carnall ioy entreth gently, but in the end it causeth remorse & destruction. What is elswhere to be seene, which thou canst not see heere? Heere thou seest heauen and earth, & all the elements, of which al other things are made.

8. What is there any where to be seene that can long continue vnder the sunne? Thou thinkest perhaps to satiate thy selfe, and haue thy fil; but thou shalt neuer attaine it. If it were possible for thee to see al things created, present before thine eyes, what were it all but a vaine & vnprofitable sight? Lift vp thine eyes to God in heauen, & aske pardon of thy sinnes & negligẽces. Leaue vaine

things to the vaine. Attend thou to that which God cõmandeth. Shut thy dore vpon thee, & call vpon Iesus thy beloued. Be thou with him in thy Cell, for thou shalt not find so great peace in any other place. If thou hadst staied within, & not giuen eare to idle newes, thou haddest kept thy selfe better in good peace. But now that thou deligtest sometimes to heare nouelties, it is fit thou suffereſt for it some trouble & disquiet of mind.

Of compunction of hart.

CHAPT. XXI.

IF thou wilt profit any thing, keepe thy selfe alwaies in the feare of God, and yielde not too much scope to liberty. Containe

all thy senses vnder the rule of discipline, and giue not thy selfe to foolish mirth. Giue thy selfe to compunction of hart, & thou shalt finde deuotion. Compunction discouereth much good, which with too much liberty is quickly lost. It is meruaile that a man can euer perfectly reioyce in this life, if he consider his banishment, and weigh the many perils, wherwith his soule is inuironed. The leuity of our mind, and the little care we haue of our faults, makes vs not to feele the sorrowes of our soule.

2. But oftentimes we vainely laugh, when we haue iust cause to weepe. There is neither true liberty, nor good mirth, but that which is in the feare of God, accompanied with a good conscience. Happy is he, that can a-

uoyd all cauſe of diſtraction, and draw him ſelfe to the vnion of holy compunction. Happy is he, that can abandon all that may defile, or burden his conſcience. Fight manfully, one cuſtome ouercomes another. If thou canſt forbeare to intermeddle with that which belonges to others; they will not hinder thee in that which thou haſt to doe.

3. Buſy not thy ſelfe in matters which appertaine to others: neither doe thou meddle at all with the affaires of thy betters. Looke firſt of all to thy ſelfe, and haue a more eſpecial care to admonish thy ſelfe, then whomſoeuer thou loueſt beſt. If thou haſt not the fauour of men, be not therfore grieued: but let this ſeeme vnto thee a moſt iuſt cauſe of griefe, that thou lookeſt not

to thy selfe with that care, which beseemeth the seruant of God, and a deuout religious person. It is oftentimes better and more secure, that a man hath not manie consolations in this life, especially such, as are aggreable to the inclination of our corrupt nature. But that we haue none at all, or do seldome tast diuine comforts, the fault is ours, that do not seeke for compunction of hart, nor do wholy forsake the vaine comforts of this world.

4. Acknowledge thy selfe vnworthy of diuine comforts, and that thou hast deserued great tribulation. When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world grieuous & loathsome vnto him. A good man findeth alwaies sufficient cause of teares and sorrow; for whether he con-

ſider himſelfe, or weighe the eſtat of his neighbour, he knoweth that none liueth here without tribulation. And how much the more throughly he conſidereth himſelfe: ſo much the more is his ſorrow. Our ſinnes and vices in which we are ſo plunged, that we can ſeldom contemplate the things of heauen, do miniſter vnto vs matter of moſt iuſt ſorrow and harty contrition.

5. If thou didſt thinke more diligently of thy death, then of liuing long, thou wouldeſt without doubt be more careful in the amendement of thy life. And if thou wouldeſt conſider within thy ſelfe, the paines of hell, or of purgatoire, I am perſwaded it would moue thee to endure any labour or paine whatſoeuer in this world, and not to feare any

kinde of auſterity. But becauſe theſe things enter not to the hart, and we ſtill loue that which delighteth vs, therfore we remaine cold & void of ſpiritual vigour.

6. Oftentimes our want of ſpirit is the cauſe, that our wretched bodies do ſo quickly complaine. Pray therfore with all humility to our Lord, that he will vouchſafe to giue thee the ſpirit of contrition, and ſay with the Prophet. Feed me, o Lord, with the bread of teares, and giue me to drink with teares in meaſure.

Of the conſideratiõ of humane Miſery.

CHAP. XXII.

MIſerable thou art wherſoeuer thou be, & whitherſoeuer thou turneſt, if thou turneſt not thy ſelfe to God. Why

art thou troubled when thinges ſucceed not as thou wouldeſt, & deſireſt? Who is there that hath all thinges as he will? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man vpō earth. There is not anie man in this world without ſome tribulation or affliction, though he be a King, or a Pope. Who thinkeſt thou then is in beſt caſe? Truly he that willingly ſuffereth ſomething for God.

3. Many weak and feeble men ſay: Behold how well ſuch a one liues, how rich, how powerfull, how beautifull, how great a man he is! but lift vp thine eyes to the riches of heauen, & thou shalt ſee, that all temporal proſperity is as nothing, full of vncertainty, and which rather oppreſſeth then otherwiſe: for it is neuer had without ſolicitude &

feare. The felicity of man, consisteth not in hauing aboundance of temporall riches: a meane sufficeth. It is trulie misery enough to liue vpon earth. How much more a man desireth to be spirituall, so much the more distastfull is this presēt life vnto him: for he better perceaueth, & seeth more cleerly the defects of human corruption. To eate, to drinke, to watch, to sleepe, to labour, to repose, and to be subiect to all other necessities of nature, is doubtlesse a great misery to a deuout mind, that would gladly be free & deliuered frō all sinne.

4. The inward man is much oppressed with these corporall necessities, whilst he is in this world. And therfore the holy Prophet, prayeth with great deuotion to be deliuered frō them,

saying: Deliuer me, O Lord, from my neceſſities. But woe be to them that know not their miſerie, and much more to them that loue this miſerable, and corruptible life. For ſome there be ſo dotingly affected vnto it, that although with labour and begginge, they ſcarce get bread to eate, yet if they might liue heere alwaies, they would care but little for the Kingdome of heauen.

4. O ſenſleſſe creatures and infidels in hart, who lie buried ſo deepe in earth, that they haue no taſt nor feeling, but of ſenſuall things! But miſerable wretches, they shall in the end feele, to their coſt, how vile, and of no eſteeme was that which they loued. The Saints of God and the deuout ſeruants and friends of Chriſt, reſpected little what

pleaſed

pleased their natural inclinations, for what flourished in this life: but with their whole hopes and intentions, they sought after the riches of heauen. Their whole desire was carried vp to those euerlasting treasures, which are inuisible; least they might haue bene drawne to base affections, by the loue of visible thinges. Loose not thy hope to profit in spirituall matters: there is yet time: the houre is not yet past.

5. Why wilt thou deferre thy good purpose? Rise vp in this verie instant, and begin, and say: Now is the time to worke, the time to fight: now is it a fit time to amend my selfe. When any tribulation, or affliction doth befall thee, then is the time to merit. Thou must passe through fire and water, before thou come to

reſt. Vnleſſe thou vſe violence to thy ſelfe, thou ſhalt not ouercome thy euill inclinations. As longe as we carry about with vs this frayle body of ours, we can neuer be without ſinne, nor liue without tediouſnes and griefe. We would gladly enioy quietnes, and be deliuered from all miſery; but for that we haue by ſinne loſt our innocency, we haue together with it loſt alſo our happines. And therfor it behoueth vs to haue patience, & to expect the mercy of God, till this inquiry haue an end, & that which is mortal be ſwallowed vp of life.

6. O, how great is the frailty of man alwaies inclined to euill! To day thou confeſſeſt thy ſinnes, and to morrow thou committeſt againe the ſame which

thou didſt confeſſe. Now thou purpoſeſt to take heed, & within an houre thou doſt as if thou hadſt made no purpoſe at all. We may therfore with great reaſon humble our ſelues, and neuer admit any thought of our owne eſteeme, being ſo weak as we are, and ſubiect to euery change. Full ſoone alas (God knowes) is that loſt by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gotten by grace.

7. What wil become of vs in the end, who do ſo timely begin to wax colde? Wo be vnto vs, if we will now giue our ſelues to eaſe, as if all were already in peace and ſecurity; when as yet there ſcarce appeareth ſo much as any ſigne of true ſanctity in our conuerſation. It were needful that we were taught

good manners againe like Children, if ſo perhaps there might be ſome more hope of our amendment, and profit in ſpirit.

Of the conſideration of death.

CHAP. XXIII.

The houre of death will quickly ouertake thee, & therefore look how thou liueſt. To day a man is liuing, and to morrow he doth not apeare; and being once out of ſight, he is alſo quickly out of minde. O dulneſſe and hardneſſe of mans hart, who thinketh only on that he ſeeth, and foreſeeth not that which is to come! Thou ſhouldeſt alwaies ſo order thy thoughts and actions, as if this day, thou wert to depart this life. If thou hadſt a good conſ-

cience, thou wouldeſt not much feare death. It is better to auoid ſinne, then to fly death. If thou be not prepared to day, how wilt thou be prepared to morrow? To morrow is vncertaine, and whether thou shalt ſee it or no, thou knoweſt not.

2. What doth it auaile vs to liue long, when we do ſo little amend? A long life doth not alwaies make vs berter, nay rather it oftentimes heapeth vpon vs a great loade of ſinnes. O that we had ſpent one day well in this worde! Many do reckon the yeares of their conuerſion, but full ſlender oftentimes is the fruite of amendment. If it be a dreadfull thing to dye, perhaps it will be more dangerous for thee to liue long. Bleſſed is he, that hath alwaies before his eyes

the houre of his death, and dif-
poſeth himſelfe daily therunto.
If thou haſt at any time ſeene a
man die, thinke with thy ſelfe,
that thou muſt one day paſſe the
ſame way.

3. When it is morning, think
that perhaps thou ſhalt not liue
vntill night; and when euening
comes, do not dare to promiſe
vnto thy ſelfe the next morning.
Be alwaies ready, & ſo order thy
life, that death may neuer take
thee vnprepared. Many die ſud-
dainly, for the ſonne of man will
come, when we leaſt thinke of
it. When that laſte houre ſhall
come, thou wilt begin to thinke
farre otherwiſe of thy life, and
much lament, that thou haſt been
ſo ſlacke and negligent.

4. O, how wiſe and happy is
he that now laboureth to be

such in his life, as he wisheth to be found at the houre of his death? For the perfect contempt of the world, the feruent desire to profit in vertue, the loue of discipline, the labour of pennance, the readinesse of obedience, the forsaking of our selues, and the bearing patiently of all aduersity for the loue of Christ, will giue great confidence of a happy end. Thou maist do much good whiles thou art well; but when thou art sick, what thou wilt be able to doe I know not. Few do grow better, and amend themselues with sicknes; as also they that wander much abroad, seldome become holy.

5. Trust not vpon thy friends or neighbours; nether do thou put off to future times, the care of thy soules health, for thou

shalt ſooner be forgotten, then thou dooſt imagine. It is better now to prouide in time, and do ſome good before thou goeſt, then to truſt in the help of others, when thou art gone. If thou haſt noe care of thy ſelfe now when thou haſt time, who wil be carefnll for thee herafter? The time which now thou haſt is very precious. Now are the daies of health. Now is the time acceptable. But alas that thou ſpendeſt it ſo little to thy profit, in which thou mighteſt gaine eternal life? The time will come, when thou wilt deſire one day, or one houre to amend, and I cannot aſſeure thee, that thou shalt obtaine it.

6. O my deareſt brother, from how great danger maiſt thou deliuer they ſelfe? from how

great feare maist thou be freed, if thou dost now liue fearfull, and carefull of thy death? Labour to liue in such sort, that at the houre of death, thou maist rather reioyce them feare. Learne now to dye to the world, that thou maist then begin to liue with Christ. Learne now to contemne all earthly thinges, that thou maist then freelie goe to Christ. Chastice now thy body with pennance, that thou maist then haue assured confidence.

7. Ah foole, why dost thou think thou shalt liue long, being not certaine of so much as one day? How many haue bene deceaued, and taken out of this world on a suddaine, when they least expected it! How often hast thou heard, how such a one was suddainely slaine, another was

drowned, another falling from ſome high place brake his neck, another dyed at his meate, another when he was playing: one came to his end by fire, another by ſword, another by plague, another died by the hands of theeues: ſo as death is the end of all, and the life of man paſſeth away like a shaddow.

8. Who will remember thee and who will pray for thee after thy death? Do now, beloued brother, do now what thou canſt, for thou knoweſt not how ſoon thou shalt die, nor what shall befall thee after thy death. Now whilſt thou haſt time, heape together eternall riches. Thinke on nothinge, but on the health of thy ſoule. Haue care only on that which belongeth to God. Make the Saintes of God thy

friends by honouring them, and imitating their vertues, that whē thou departeſt this life, they may receaue thee into their euerlaſting dwellings.

9. Eſteeme thy ſelfe as a pilgrime, and ſtranger vpon earth, and as one to whom the affaires of this world do nothing appertaine. Keepe thy hart free, and lifted vp to God, for thou haſt not heere any permanent Citty. Send thither thy prayers dayly with ſighes, and teares; that thy ſoule may deſerue to paſſe with much happines to our Lord after death.

Of Iudgment and the punishment of ſinne.

CHAPT. XXIV.

IN all things conſider the end, and how thou wilt be able to

ſtand before that ſeuere Iudge, from whom nothing can be hidden, and is not appeaſed with guifts, nor admitteth excuſes, but iudgeth according to iuſtice. O moſt wretched & foolish ſinner, that feareſt ſometimes the countenance of an angry man; what anſwere wilt thou make to God, to whom al thy wickednes is knowne? Why prouideſt thou not for thy ſelf againſt that rigorous day of iudgement, in which no man can be excuſed, or defended by another, but euerie one wil be burden inough to himſelfe? Now thy paines are profitable, thy teares acceptable, thy cries are heard, thy ſorrow ſatisfieth for thy ſinnes, and purgeth thy ſoule.

2. The patient man hath a great and healthfull purgatory,

who receauing iniuries, grieueth more for others malice, then for his owne wronges; prayeth willingly for his aduersaries, and from his hart forgiueth their offences, delayeth not to aske forgiuenes of whomsoeuer he hath offended; is sooner moued to cõpassion then to anger; vseth often violence to himselfe; and laboureth with his whole force to subdue the flesh in all things to the spirit. It is better to purge our sinnes, and vices now, then to reserue them for purgatory. Verily the inordinat loue we beare to our selues, deceaueth vs.

3. What other thing shal that fire feede on, but thy sinnes? How much the more thou sparest thy selfe now, and followest the desires of thy corrupt nature: so much the more grieuously

shalt thou be punished hereafter, and so much the more matter dost thou keepe for that purging fire. In the selfe same wherin a man hath sinned, shall he be more grieuously punished. There shal the slouthful be pricked forwardes, with burninge goads. There shall the Gluttons be tormented with insatiable hunger and thirst. There shall the lasciuious & the louers of pleasures, be couered ouer with burninge pitch & brimstone. The enuious like raging dogges, shall there howle for griefe.

4. There is no vice that shal not haue his proper torment. The proud, shall be full of all shame and confusion. The couetous, shall be in miserable want. One houre of paine there shall be more sharp, then a hundred yea-

res of moſt hard pennance here. There is no reſt there, nor comfort for the damned. Heere yet ſometimes our labours ceaſe, and we enioy the cõfort of our friẽds. Be now ſolicitous and ſorrowful for thy ſinnes; that in the day of iudgment thou maieſt be ſecure in the company of the bleſſed ſoules: for then ſhall the iuſt ſtãd in great conſtancy, againſt thoſe that afflicted and oppreſſed them. Then ſhall he ſtande to iudge, who now doth humbly ſubmit himſelf to the iudgment of men. Then ſhall the poore and humble haue great confidence, and the proud ſhall be compaſſed about on all ſides with feare.

5. Then wil it appeare, that he was wiſe in this world, who had here learned to be as a foole and diſpiſed for Chriſt. Then

shall affliction patiently ſuffered delight vs, and iniquity shall ſtop her mouth. Thē shall the deuout reioyce, and the irreligious mourne. Then shall the chaſticed flesh more florish, then if it had bene alwaies nourished in delights. Then shall the poore garment shine, and the precious robes appeare contēptible. Then shall the meane cottage be more commended, then the ſumptuous pallace. Then will conſtant patience more auaile vs, then all earthly power. Then will ſimple obedience be more eſteemed, then all worldly wiſedome.

6. Then shal a good and pure conſcience yelde vs more comfort, then the profound learning of Philoſophy. Then shall the contempt of riches weigh more, then al the wordlings treaſures:

Then

Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou haſt praied deuoutly, then that thou haſt fared daintily. Then wilt thou be more ioyfull that thou haſt obſerued ſilence, then that thou haſt talked much. Then will good workes appeare of much more eſteeme then faire words. Then a ſtrict life and harde pennance, will he more pleaſinge, then all earthly delights. Accuſtome thy ſelfe now to ſuffer a little, that thou maieſt then be deliuered from more grieuous paines. Proue here firſt what thou canſt endure heerafter. If now thou canſt beare ſo little, how wilt thou be able to endute euerlaſtinge torments? If now a little ſufferinge make thee ſo impatient, what will hell fire do heerafter? Aſſure thy ſelf, thou canſt not haue two

Paradiſes. It is impoſſible for thee, to enioy delights heere in this world, and raigne herafter with Chriſt in heauen.

7. If thou hadſt hitherto liued alwaies in honors and delights, what woulde it auaile thee, if thou shouldeſt preſently dy? All is vanity, but to loue God, and only to ſerue him. And he that loueth God with his whole hart, needeth to feare nether death, punishment, iudgment, nor hell. for perfect loue, giues ſecure acceſſe to God. But he that delighteth alwaies in ſinne, what wonder though he alwaies feare death, and be terrified with the thought of Iudgment? Yet it is good, that if loue be not of force to withhold thee from ſin, that at leaſt the feare of hell may reſtayne thee. And he that layeth aſide the feare of God, can

neuer continue long in good ſtate, but falleth quickly into the ſnares of the diuell.

Of the feruent amendment of our whole life.

CHAP. XXV.

BE watchfull and diligent in the ſeruice of God, and often think with thy ſelfe wherefore thou cameſt, and why thou didſt leaue the world. Was it not that thou mighteſt liue to God and become a ſpirituall man? Go on therfore with courage, thou ſhalt ſhortly receaue the reward of thy labours, and there ſhall be no more feare nor ſorrow, in the confines of thy habitation. Thou muſt labour here a while, thou ſhalt afterwards haue great reſt; yea euerlaſting ioy. If thou continueſt

faithfull and diligent in ſeruing of God, do not doubt but God will be faithfull and liberal in giuing thee reward. Thou oughteſt to haue a good hope of getting the victory, but thou muſt not make thy ſelfe aſſeured thereof, leaſt thou wax negligent, or be puffed vp with pride.

2. When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wauering betweene feare and hope, did once, being oppreſſed with griefe, proſtrate himſelf in a Chruch in prayer before an Altar, & ſaid within himſelfe: O if I knew that I should yet perſeuer! he preſently heard as it were a voice from God, which ſaid: What if thou dideſt know it, what wouldſt thou do? Do now what thou wouldeſt do then, and thou shalt be ſecure. And being here-

with comforted, and ſtrenghtned in mind, he committed himſelfe wholy to the will of God, and that noyſome anxiety ceaſed: nether had he any mind to ſearch curiouſly any further, to know what should befall him; but rather laboured to vnderſtand what was the perfect, and acceptable will of God, for the beginning and accomplishing of euerie good worke.

3. Hope in our Lord, and do good, ſaith the Prophet, and inhabit the land, and thou shalt be fed in the riches thereof. One thing there is that draweth manie back from that ſpirituall good, and the diligent amendment of their liues: the horror of the difficulty, and the labour of the combat. But they aboue others profit moſt in vertue, that endeauour

moſt to ouercome thoſe things, which are grieuous and contrary vnto them. For there a man profiteth more, and deſerueth greater grace, wher he more ouercometh and mortifieth himſelfe in ſpirit.

4. But all men haue not alike to ouercome and mortify: yet he that is zealous and diligent, though he haue more paſſions, shall profit more in vertue, then another that is of a more temperate diſpoſition, if he be leſſe feruent in the purſuite of vertue. Two things chiefly helpe to our amendment, to wit, to withdraw our ſelues violently from that to which nature is viciouſly inclined and to labour earneſtly for that vertue, which we moſt want. Be carefull alſo to auoide with great diligence, thoſe thinges in thy ſelfe, which do moſt diſ-

pleaſe thee in others.

5. Gather ſome profit to thy ſoule out of euery occaſion, and wherſoeuer thou be, be ſo as if thou ſeeſt or heareſt any good, ſtirre vp thy ſelfe to the imitation thereof. But if thou ſeeſt any thing worthy of repoofe, beware thou do not the ſame, And if at any time thou haſt done it, labour quickly to amend it. As thine eye obſerueth others, ſo art thou alſo noted againe by others. O, how ſweet and comfortable a thing it is, to ſee the ſeruants of Chriſt feruent and deuout, endued with vertuous and decent manners! And on the contrary, how pittifull and grieuous a thing it is, to ſee them that liue in a diſſolute and diſordered ſort, not applying themſelues to that, for which they

were called! O, how great dommage and great danger is it: to neglect theaime and end of their vocation, & to busy themselues, in that which appertaineth not vnto them, nor is committed to their care.

6. Be mindfull of the purpose thou hast made, & haue alwaies before the eyes of thy soule the picture of thy Sauiour crucified. Thou hast good cause to be ashamed, looking vpon the life of Christ, seing thou hast so slacklie endeauoured to conforme thy selfe vnto him though thou hast walked a long time in the way of the seruice of God. A religious person that exerciseth himselfe seriously, and deuoutly in the most holy life, & passion of our lord, shal there aboundantly find whatsoeuer is necessary, & profi-

table for him; nether shall he need to seek any thing elswher, but only in Iesus. O, if Iesus crucified would come into our harts, how quickly & fully should we be instructed in all truth.

7. A feruent religious person taketh, and beareth all well that is commanded him: but he that is negligent and cold, hath tribulation vpon tribulation, and on all sides is afflicted: for he is void of inward consolation, and is forbidden to seeke externall comforts. A religious person that liueth not according to discipline, is in great danger of the ruine of his soule. He that seeketh libertie and ease, shall euer liue in disquiet: for one thinge or other will allwaies displease him.

8. How do so many other re-

ligious persons, who liue vnder the strict rule of Monastical discipline? They seldom go abroad, they liue retiredly, they feede meanly, they are cloathed coursely, they labour much, speake little, watch longe, rise earlie, spend much time in prayer, read often, and keep themselues in al kinde of discipline. Consider the Carthusians, Cistercians, and the Religious men and women of diuers Orders, how they rise euery night to sing praises vnto God. And how vnseemly then it is for thee, to be slouthfull in so holy a worke, when as so great multitudes of religious persons, do begin to glorify God.

9. O, that we had nothing els to doe, but alwaies with our mouth, and whole hart to praise our Lord God! O, that thou

mighteſt neuer haue need to eate, nor drinke, nor ſleepe, but mighteſt alwaies praiſe God, & only imploy thy ſelfe in the exerciſes of ſpirit: thou ſhouldſt then be much more happy, then now thou art, when for ſo manie neceſſities, thou art conſtrained to ſerue thy body. Would God theſe neceſſities were not at all, but only the ſpiritual refections of the ſoule, which (alas) we taſt of too ſeldome.

10. When a man commeth to that eſtate, that he ſeeketh no comfort of any creature, then doth he begin to take perfect contentment, and delight in God. Then ſhall he be contented with whatſoeuer doth befal him in this world. Then ſhall he neither reioyce in greate matters, nor be ſorrowful for ſmall,

but with great integrity & confidence comit himſelfe to God, who shall be vnto him all in all: to whom nothing doth perish, nor dye, but all things doe liue vnto him, and ſerue him at a beck without delay.

11. Remember allwaies the end, and how that time loſt neuer returnes. Without care and diligence, thou shalt neuer gett vertues. If thou beginneſt to wax colde, it will be euill with thee: but if thou giue thy ſelfe to feruour of ſpirit, thou shalt find much peace, and feele leſſe labour, through the aſſiſtance of Gods grace, and loue of vertue. The feruent and diligent man is ready, and prepared for all things. It is harder to reſiſt vices and paſſions, then to toile in bodily labours. He that auoideth

not ſmall faults, by little and little, falleth into greater. Thou wilt alwaies reioyce in the euening, if thou ſpend the day profitably. Be watchfull ouer thy ſelfe, ſtir vp thy ſelfe, warne thy ſelfe, and whatſoeuer becomes of others, neglect not thy ſelfe. The greater violence thou vſeſt againſt thy ſelfe, the more thou ſhalt profit.

THE SECOND BOOKE.

Of ſpirituall conuerſation.

CHAPT. I.

THE Kingdome of God is within you, ſayth our Lord. Turne thee with thy whole hatt vnto our Lord,

and forſake this miſerable world, and thy ſoule ſhall find reſt. Learne to deſpiſe exteriour thinges, & to giue thy ſelf to the interiour, and thou ſhalt perceaue the kingdome of God to come into thee. For the kingdome of God is peace, and ioy in the holy Ghoſt, which is not giuen to the wicked. Chriſt will come into thee, and ſhew thee his diuine comfort, if thou prepare for him a wotthy manſion within thee. All his glory and beauty is within, and there he pleaſeth himſelfe. The inward man he often viſits, and hath with him ſweet diſcourſes, pleaſant comfort, much peace, wonderfull familiarity.

2. O faithfull ſoule, make ready thy hart for this bridegome that he may vouchſafe to come

vnto thee, and dwell within thee, For he saith: If any loue me, he wil keep my word, and we will come vnto him, and will make our aboad with him. Giue therfore vnto Christ a place in thy hart, and deny entrance to all others. When thou hast Christ, thou art rich, and he wil suffice thee. He will be thy faithfull and prouident helper in all things, so as thou shalt not need to trust in men. For men are soone changed, and quickly deceyued; but Christ remaineth foreuer, and standeth firmly vnto the end.

3. There is little trust to be put in a fraile and mortall man, though he be profitable & deare vnto thee: nether oughtest thou much to be grieued, if somtimes he crosse, and contradict thee.

They that to day take thy part, to mortow may be againſt thee; and ſo on the contrary, they often turne like vnto the winde. Put all thy truſt in God, and feare and loue him: He will anſwere for thee, and do in all thinges what is beſt. Thou haſt not here a dwelling Citty, and wherſoeuer thou be, thou art a ſtranger and pilgrime: nether shalt thou euer haue reſt, vnleſſe thou be perfectly vnited vnto Chriſt.

4. Why doſt thou linger, and make delaies here, ſince this is not the place of thy reſt? In heauen ought to be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be regarded as it were in the way. All things paſſe away, and thou together with them. Beware thou cleaue not vnto them leaſt

thou

thou be enthralled? and ſo doeſt perish Let thy thought be on the higheſt, and thy prayer directed vnto Chriſt without ceaſing. If thou canſt not contemplate high and heauenly things, reſt they ſelfe in the paſſion of Chriſt, and dwell willingly in the wounds of his ſacred body. For if thou fly deuoutly vnto his holy wounds, and to the precious markes of his paſſion, thou shalt feele great comfort in tribulation: nether wilt thou much care for being deſpiſed of men but wilt eaſily beare the wordes of ſlaunderous tongues.

5. Chriſt was alſo in the world deſpiſed and in great neceſſity: forſaken by his acquaintance, and friends in the middeſt of ſlaunders. Chriſt would ſuf-

fer, and be contemned, and dareſt thou complaine? Chriſt had aduerſaries and backbiters; and wilt thou haue all men thy friends and benefactours? For what ſhall thy patience be crowned, if no aduerſity happen vnto thee? If thou wilt ſuffer no aduerſity, how wilt thou be the friend of Chriſt? Suffer with Chriſt, & for Chriſt, if thou deſire to raigne with Chriſt.

6. if thou haddeſt once perfectly entred into the hart of Ieſus, and taſted a little of his burning loue, then wouldeſt thou not weigh thyne owne commodity or diſcommodity, but wouldeſt rather reioyce at ſlaunders, when they should chance to be caſt vpon thee: for the loue of Ieſus makeeth a man to deſpiſe himſelfe. A louer of Ieſus, and

of truth, and a true ſpirituall perſon, and free from inordinate affections, can freelie turne himſelfe vnto God, and lift himſelfe aboue himſelfe in ſpirit, and with great ioy of his ſoule reſt in God.

7. He that iudgeth of all thinges as they are, and not as they are ſaid, and eſteemed to be, is truly wiſe, and taught rather by God then men. He that can liue ſpiritually, and make ſmall reckoning of outward things, nether requireth places, nor attendeth times for performing of deuout exerciſes. A ſpiritual man quickly recollecteth himſelfe: becauſe he neuer yieldeth ouer himſelfe wholy to outward things. He is not hindred by outward labour or buſines, which may be neceſſary

for the time, but as things fall out, so he frameth himselfe vnto them. He that hath well ordered and disposed all things within, careth little for the vaine inuentions, and peruerse inclinations of men. So much is a man hindred & distracted, how much he draweth matters vnto himselfe.

8. If all went well with thee, and thou hadst thy hart well purged, all things would fall out to thy good and profit. But manie things displease, and often trouble thee, because thou art not yet perfectly dead vnto thy selfe, nor free from the affection of earthly things. Nothing so defileth and intangleth the hart of man, as the impure loue to creatures. If thou refuse outward comfort, thou wilt be able to

contemplate the things of heauen, and often receiue internall ioy.

Of humble submission.

CHAP. II.

RESpect not much who is with thee, or who is against thee. Endeauour, and take care, that God may be for thee in euery thing thou doest. Haue a good conscience, and God wil defend thee. For whom God will help, no malice of man can hurt. If thou canst hold thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see that our Lord wil help thee. He knoweth the time, and manner, how to deliurer thee, and therfore thou oughtest to resigne thy selfe vnto him. It belongs to God to help,

and to deliuer from all shame. Oftentimes it is very profitable, for the better keeping of humility, that others know & reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himselfe for his faults, then he easily pacifieth others, & quickly satisfieth those that are offended with him. God protecteth and deliuereth the humble: he loueth and comforteth the humble: vnto the humble man he inclineth himselfe: vnto the humble he giueth great grace; and after his humiliation, he raiseth him vnto glory. Vnto the humble he reuealeth his secrets, and sweetly draweth and inuiteth him vnto himselfe. The humble when he hath receaued confusion, is in peace, for that he resteth in God, and relieth not

on the world. Doe not thinke that thou haſte profited any thing, vnleſſe thou eſteeme thy ſelfe inferiour to all.

Of a good and peaceable man.

CHAPT. III.

FIrſt keep thy ſelfe in peace, and then maiſt thou pacify others. A peaceable man doth more good, then he that is well learned. A paſſionate man turneth good into euill, and eaſily beleeueth the worſt. A good peaceable man turneth al things into good. He that is well in peace, is not ſuſpitious of any, but he that is diſcontented, and troubled, is toſſed with diuers ſuſpitions: he is nether quiet himſelfe, nor ſuffereth others to

be quiet. He often ſpeaketh that which he ought not to ſpeake, and omitteth that which were more expedient for him to do, He conſidereth what others are bound to doe: & neglecteth that which de is bound to himſelfe. Firſt therefore haue a carefull zeale ouer thy ſelfe, & then thou maiſt inſtly shew thy ſelfe zealous of thy neigbours good.

2. Thou knoweſt well how to excuſe & colour thine owne deeds, and thou wilt not receaue the excuſes of others. It were more meet, that thou dideſt accuſe thy ſelf, and excuſe thy brother. If thou wilt be borne withall, beare alſo with another. Behold how far off thou art as yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, or

to be moued with indignation, but only againſt himſelfe. It is no greate matter to conuerſe with the good, & thoſe that are of a gentle diſpoſition, for that is naturally pleaſing to all, and euery one willingly enioyeth peace, and loueth thoſe beſt that agree with him. But to be able, to liue peaceably with the vnquiet, & peruerſe minds, or with the diſorderly, or ſuch as contradict vs, is a great grace, and very commendable.

3. Some there are, that keep themſelues in peace, and are in peace alſo with others. And ther are ſome, that nether are in peace themſelues, nor ſuffer others to be in peace: they are troubleſom to others, but alwaies more troubleſom to themſelues. And others there are that keep themſelues in

peace, & labour to bring others vnto peace. Our whole peace in this miſerable life, conſiſteth rather in humble ſuffering, then in not feeling aduerſities. He that can beſt tell how to ſuffer, wil beſt keep himſelfe in peace. He is a conquerour of himſelfe, a Lord of the world, friend of Chriſt, and heyre of heauen.

Of a pure mind, and vpright intētion.

CHAPT. IV.

VVith two wings man is lifted vp from earthly vanities, that is, with ſimplicity, & purity. Simplicity ought to be in our intention. Purity in our affection. Simplicity fixeth the eyes of the ſoule in God. Puritie apprehendeth and taſteth his ſweetnes. No good action wil hinder thee,

if thou be inwardly free from inordinate affection. If thou intend and seeke nothing els but the will of God, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enioy internall liberty. If thy hart were sincere and vpright, then euery creature would be vnto thee a looking glasse of life, and a booke of holy doctrine. There is no creature so little and abiect, that representeth not the goodnes of God.

2. If in thine owne hart thou wert good and pure, then thou wouldest be able to see and vnderstand all things without any impediment. A pure hart penetrateth heauen, and pierceth the depth of hell Such as euery one is inwardly: so he iudgeth outwardly. If there be ioy in the world, surely a man of a pure

hart possesseth it. And if there be any where tribulation & affliction, an euill conscience feels it. As iron put into the fire looseth his rust, & becometh bright like fire: so he that wholy turneth himselfe vnto God, becommeth feruent, & is changed into a new man.

3. When one beginneth to wax cold: then he is afraid of a small labour, and willingly receaueth externall comfort. But when he once beginneth to ouercome himselfe perfectly, and to walke manfully in the way of God, then he esteemeth those things to be light, which before seemed grieuous vnto him.

Of the consideration of ones selfe.

CHAP. V.

VVe cannot trust much to our selues, for that grace often-

times and vnderſtanding is wanting. There is but little light in vs, & that which we haue, we quickly loſe by our negligence, And oftentimes we do not perceaue our owne inward blindnes. We often do euil, & excuſe it worſe. We are ſomtimes moued with paſſion and we thinke it to be zeale. We reprehend ſmall things in others, and paſſe ouer greater matters in our ſelues. We quickly feele, & weigh what we ſuffer at the hands of others: but we mind not what others ſuffer from vs. He that doth well and deeply conſider his owne works, will find little cauſe to iudg hardly of another.

2. A ſpirituall man preferreth the care of himſelfe, before all other cares. And he that diligently attendeth vnto himſelfe,

doth ſeldome ſpeake much of others. Thou wilt neuer be recollected & deuout, vnleſſe thou paſſe ouer other mens matters with ſilence, and looke eſpecially to thy ſelfe. If thou attend wholy vnto God and thy ſelfe, thou wilt be little moued with whatſoeuer thou ſeeſt abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not with thy ſelfe? And when thou haſt runne ouer all, what haſt thou profited, if thou doeſt neglect thy ſelfe? If thou deſireſt peace of mind and true vnion, thou muſt eſteeme little of all earthly thinges, and looke only to thy ſelfe.

3. Thou shalt therfore profit much, if thou keepe thy ſelfe free frō all temporal cares. Thou shalt hinder thy ſelfe greatly, if thou eſteeme any thing of this

world. Let nothing be great vnto thee, nothing high, nothing grateful, nothing acceptable, but only God himselfe purely; or that which is for God. Esteeme all comfort vaine which thou receaueſt from any creature. A soule that loueth God despiseth all things that be inferiour vnto God. God alone is euerlasting, and of infinite greatnes, filling all creatures: the comfort of the soule, and the true ioy of the hart.

Of the comfort of a good Conscience.

CHAP. VI.

THe glory of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience. Haue a good conscience, and thou shalt euer haue ioy. A good conscience is able to beare much, and is cheerfull

in aduerſities. An euill conſcience is alwaies fearful & vnquiet. Thou ſhalt reſt ſweetly, if thy hart doth not reprehend thee. Do thou neuer reioyce, but when thou haſt done well. Sinners haue neuer true mirth, nor feele inward peace: becauſe there is no peace to the impious, ſaith our Lord. And if they ſhould ſay: We are in peace, no euill ſhall fall vpon vs, and who ſhall dare to hurt vs? beleeue them not: for vpon a ſuddaine will ariſe the wrath of God, and their deedes ſhall be turned into nothing, and their conceipts ſhall perish.

2. To glory in tribulation, is no hard thing for him that loueth; for to glory ſo, is to glory in the Croſſe of our Lord. That glorie is short, which is giuen and receaued from men. Sorrow alwaies

waies accompanieth the glory of the world. The glory of the good is in their consciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladnes of the iust is of God, and in God: and their ioy is of the truth. He that desireth true and euerlasting glory, careth not for that which passeth away with time. And he that seeketh temporall glory, or contemneth it not from his harte, shewes himselfe but little to esteeme of the glorie of heauen. He enioyeth great tranquillitie and peace of mind, that careth nether for the prayses, nor dispraises of men.

3. He will easily be content and pacified, whose conscience is pure. He is not the more holy, though thou commend him: not the more abiect though thou dispraise him. What thou art, that

thou art: nether canſt thou be truly ſaid to be greater, then what thou art in the ſight of God. If thou conſider what thou art within thee, thou wilt not care what men ſay of thee. Man ſeeth in the face, but God looketh into the hart. Man conſidereth the deedes, but God weigheth the intentions. To doe alwaies well, and to eſteeme little of himſelfe, is a token of an humble minde. To refuſe to be comforted by any creature, is a ſigne of great purity, and inward confidence.

4. He that ſeeketh no outward witnes for himſelfe, doth shew that he hath wholy committed himſelfe vnto God. For not he, that commendeth himſelfe, the ſame is approued (ſaith S. Paul) but whom God commendeth.

To walke inwardly with God, and not to be poſſeſſed with any outward affection, is the ſtate of an inward, and ſpirituall man.

Of the loue of Ieſus aboue all things.

CHAP. VII.

BLeſſed is he that vnderſtandeth what it is to loue Ieſus and to deſpiſe himſelfe for Ieſus. Thou oughteſt to leaue thy beloued, for thy beloued; for that Ieſus will be beloued alone aboue all thinges. The loue of things created is deceiptfull and vnconſtant: the loue of Ieſus is faithfull and conſtant. He that cleaueth vnto creatures, ſhall fall with that which is ſubiect to fal. He that imbraceth Ieſus ſhal ſtād firmely for euer. Loue him, and keep him for thy friend, who

when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must once be left of men, whether thou wilt or no.

2. Liue and die with Iesus; and commit thy selfe vnto his trust, who when all faile, can alone help thee. Thy beloued is of that nature, that he will none of that which appertaineth to others; but will haue thy hart alone, and sit like a King in his owne throne. If thou couldest purge thy sylfe perfectlie of all creatures, Iesus would willingly dwell with thee. Whatsoeuer thou putteſt in men, out of Iesus, is all no better then lost. Trust not, nor rely vpon a reed ful of wind: for that all flesh is as hay, and all the glory therof shall wither away, as the flower of the field.

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceaued, if thou looke only to the outward shew of men. And if in them thou seekest thy comfort and profit, thou shalt often feele losse. If thou seekest Iesus in all thinges, thou shalt surely finde Iesus. But if thou seekest thy selfe, thou shalt also find thy selfe, but to thy owne harme. For man doth more hurt himselfe, if he seeke not Iesus, then the whole world and all his aduersaries could annoy him.

Of familiar conuersation with Iesus.

CHAP. VIII.

VVhen Iesus is present, all is well, and nothing seemeth difficult: but when Iesu is absent euery thing is hard. When Iesus speaketh not inwardly vn-

to vs, our comfort is nothing worth: but if Ieſus ſpeake but one wortd, we feele much conſolation. Did not Mary Magdalen preſently riſe from the place where she wept, when Martha ſaide vnto her: Thy maiſter is here, and caleth thee: Happy is the houre, when Ieſus calleth from teares of ſpiritual ioy. How dry and harde art thou without Ieſus? How foolish and vaine', if thou deſire any thing out of Ieſus? Is not this a greater loſſe then if thou shouldſt looſe the whole world?

2. What can the world profit thee without Ieſus? To be without Ieſus, is a grieuous hell; and to be with Ieſus; is a ſweete Paradiſe. If Ieſus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee. He that findeth Ieſus, findeth a good trea-

sure: yea a good aboue al goods. And he that looseth Iesus, looseth too much, & more then the whole world. He is most poore, that liueth without Iesus: and he most rich, that is well with Iesus.

3 It is a great skill to know how to conuerse with Iesus: and a great wisedome, to know how to keep Iesus. Be humble, and peaceable, and Iesus wil be with thee. Be deuout and quiet, and Iesus will stay with thee. Thou maist driue away Iesus and loose his grace, if thou giuest thy selfe to outward things. And if thou shouldest driue him from thee, and loose him, vnto whom wilt thou flie, and what friend wilt thou then seeke? Without a friend, thou canst not well liue: and if Iesus be not aboue all a friend vnto thee; thou shalt be

too too ſorowfull and deſolate. Thou doeſt therfore foolishly, if thou doeſt truſt or reioyce in any other. It is better for thee to haue all the world againſt thee, then Ieſus offended with thee. Amongſt all things therfore that be deare vnto thee, let Ieſus alone be thy chiefeſt beloued.

4. Loue all for Ieſus, but Ieſus for himſelfe. Ieſus Chriſt alone is eſpecially to be beloued; who alone is found to be good, & faithfull aboue all friends. For him & in him, let as wel friends as foes be deare vnto thee: and all theſe are to be prayed for, that all may know and loue him. Neuer deſire to be ſingularly commended or beloued, for that appertaineth only vnto God, who hath none like vnto himſelf. Neither do thou deſire that the hart

of any, should be set on thee, nor do thou set thy hart on the loue of any: but let Iesus be in thee, & in euery vertuous & good man.

5. Be pure and free within, and intangle not thy harte with any creature. Thou oughtest to be as it were naked, and carry a pure harte to God, if thou wilt consider, and proue, and see how sweet our Lord is. And truly, vnlesse thou be preuented, and drawne by his grace, thou shalt neuer attaine to that happines, to forsake and cast away all, that thou alone maist be vnited to him alone. For when the grace of God commeth vnto a man, then he is strong, and nothing is hard vnto him. And when it goeth away, he is poore and weake, and as it were left vnto the will of whomsoeuer will af-

flict him. In this thou oughteſt notto be deiected, nor deſpaire; but to reſigne thy ſelfe with all indifferency vnto the wil of God, and to beare all thinges that befall thee, for the glory of Chriſt: for after winter followeth ſummer, after night commeth day, and after a tempeſt, faire weather.

Of the want of all comfort.

CHAP. IX.

IT is no great matter to deſpiſe humane comfort, when we haue diuine. It is much and very much, to be able to want both humane and diuine comfort: and for the honour and glorie of God, to be willing to endure deſolation of hart; and to ſeeke himſelfe in nothing, nor to regard his owne merit. What

greate matter is it, if thou be cheerful and deuout at the comming of heauenly grace? This houre is wished for of all men. He rideth easily, whom the grace of God carrieth. And what meruaile, if he feele not his burden, who is borne vp by the Almighty, and led by the greatest guide?

2. We are alwaies willing to haue something for our comfort: and a man doth hardly put off, and forsake himselfe. The holy martyr S. Laurence, ouercame the world with his Prelate, because he despised whatsoeuer seemed delightsome in the world: and for the loue of Christ, he patiently suffered the high Priest of God S. Syxtus to be taken from him, whom he most loued. He ouercame therfore the loue of man, by the loue

of the Creator; & he rather chose the diuine pleasure, then humane comfort. See thou also learne to forsake some necessary thing, & a beloued friend for the loue of God. Be not grieued when thou art forsaken by a friend, knowing that we all at length must be separated one from another.

3. A man must fight long, and with a constant minde, before he get the victory, and be able to place his whole harte in God. When a man confideth in himselfe, he easily slideth vnto humane cõfots, But a true louer of Christ, and a diligent follower of vertue, giueth not himselfe to such solace, nor seeketh sensible sweetnes, but rather forcible exercises, and to sustaine hard labours for Christ.

4. When therfore spiritual

comfort is giuen thee from God, receaue it thankfully, but know that it is the gift of God, not any desert of thine. Be not puffed vp, ioy not too much, neither do thou presume vainely: but be rather the more humble for that grace, and more wary and fearefull in all thy actions: for that houre will passe away, and temptation will succeed. When consolation is taken from thee, despaire not presently; but with humility and patience, attend the heauenly visitation: for God is able againe to giue thee greater consolation. This is not new, nor strange vnto them, that haue experience in the way of God: for in the great Saints and ancient Prophets, there was oftentimes such kind of alteration.

5. For which cause one when

he had grace, ſaid: I ſaid in my plenty, I will not be moued euerlaſtingly. But when this was gone from him, he addeth what he found in himſelfe, ſaying: Thou turnedſt thy face from me, and I became troubled. Yet doth he not deſpaire in the middeſt of theſe changes, but more earneſtly prayeth vnto our Lord, & ſaith: Vnto thee (o Lord) I will cry, & I will pray vnto my God. Laſtly he receaueth the fruit of his prayer, and witneſſeth that he was heard, ſaying: Our Lord hath heard me, and taken pitty on me: our Lord is become my helper. But wherein? Thou haſt turned (ſaith he) my ſorrow into ioy, and thou haſt compaſſed me about with gladnes. The great Saints haue bene ſo dear withall, we that are poore and

weake, ought not to despaire, if we be sometimes feruent, and sometimes colde; for thy spirit commeth and goeth, accordinge to the good pleasure of his will. For which cause blessed Iob saith: Thou visitest him early in the morning, & suddainly thou prouest him.

6. Wherpon therefore can I hope, or wherin ought I to trust, but in the great mercie of God alone, and in the only hope of heauenly grace? For whether I enioy the presence of good men, or deuout brethren, or faithfull friendes, or holy bookes, or learned treatises, or sweet songs and hymnes, al these helpe little, and haue little sauour, when grace forsaketh me, and I remaine left in my owne pouerty. At such a tyme there is no better reme-

die then patience, and the resig-
ninge of my selfe vnto the will
of God.

7. I neuer founde any so reli-
gious and deuout, that hath not
had sometimes a withdrawing
of grace, or felt not a decreast
of feruour. There was neuer
Saint so highly rapt, and illumi-
nated, who first or last, was not
tempted. For he is not worthy
of the high contemplation of
God, who hath not bene exer-
cised with some tribulation for
Gods sake. For tentation going
before, is wont to be a signe of
ensuing comfort. And vnto those
that are proued by tentations
heauenly comfort is promised.
He that shal ouercome, saith he,
I will giue him to eate of the
wood of life.

8. But diuine comfort is giuen
that

that a man may be stronger to beare aduersities. There followeth also tentation, least we should waxe proud of that good. The diuell sleepeth not, nether is our flesh as yet dead, therfore cease not to prepare thy selfe to the battaile: for on thy right hand, and on thy left, are enemies that neuer rest.

Of thankefulnesse for the Grace of God.

CHAPT. X.

VVHy seekest thou rest, since thou art borne to labour? Dispose thy selfe to patience, rather then to comforts: & to the bearing of the Crosse, rather thē to gladnes. What secular person is there, that would not willingly receaue spirituall ioy and

comfort, if he could alwaies haue it? Spirituall comforts exceed al the delights of the world and al the pleasures of the flesh. All wordly delights are either vaine or vncleane: but spirituall delights are only pleasant and honest, produced by vertues, and infused by God into pure harts. But no man can alwaies enioy these diuine comforts, according to his desire: for the time of temptation is not long away.

2. False freedome of mind, and great trust of our selues, is very contrary to heauenly visitations. God doth well in giuing grace: but man doth euill in not returning it againe wholy vnto God, with thankesgiuing. And therefore the gifts of grace cannot flow in vs, because we are vngratefull to the giuer: and re-

turne them not wholy to the headfountaine. For grace is euer due to him that is thankefull, and from the proud shall be taken that which is wont to be giuen to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation that taketh from me compunction: nor that contemplation which breedeth a haughty mind. For all that is high, is not holy, nor all that is sweet, good nor euery desire, pure: nor euery thinge that is deare vnto vs, is gratefull to God. I do willingly accept of that grace, whereby I may euer become more humble and fearefull, and be made more ready & able to forsake my self. He that is taught by the gift of grace, and by the scourge of the withdrawing thereof, will not dare to attribut any good to him-

ſelfe: but wil rather acknowledg himſelfe poore, and naked. Giue vnto God, that which is Gods, and aſcribe vnto thy ſelfe, that which is thine owne: that is, giue thankes vnto God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is to be attributed to thee, but only ſinne, and the punishment due therunto.

4. Content thy ſelfe, and deſire alwaies the meaneſt & loweſt thinges, and the higheſt, ſhall be giuen thee: for the higheſt ſtand not without the loweſt. The higheſt Saints before God, are the leaſt in their owne iudgments. And how much the more glorious, ſo much the humbler within thimſelues, Thoſe that are full of truth, and heauenly glory, are not deſirous of the vaine glory of this world. Thoſe

that are firmly ſetled and grounded in God, can no way be proud: And they that aſcribe all vnto God, what good ſoeuer they haue receaued, ſeeke not gloire one of another: but would haue that glory which is from God alone and deſire aboue all things to praiſe God in himſelfe, and in all the Saints, and alwaies tend vnto the ſame.

5. Be therefore gratefull for the leaſt gift, and thou ſhalt be made worthy to receaue grater. Let the leaſt be vnto thee alſo as the greateſt. & the moſt cõtemptible as an eſpeciall gift. If thou conſider the worth of the giuer, no gift will ſeeme little, or of meane eſteeme. For it is not little that is giuen by the ſouueraigne Maieſty of God, Yea if he ſhould giue punishment and ſtri-

pes, it ought to be gratefull, for that he doth it alwaies for our ſaluation, whatſoeuer he permitteth to happen vnto vs. He that deſireth to keepe the grace of God, let him be thankful for the grace giuen, and patient for the taking away thereof. Let him pray that it may returne. Let him be wary and humble, leaſt he looſe it.

How few the louers of the Croſſe of Chriſt are.

CHAPT. XI.

IEſus hath now many louers of his heauenly kingedome, but few bearers of his Croſſe. He hath many deſirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abſtinence,

All desire to reioyce with him, few will suffer any thing for him, or with him. Many follow Iesus vnto the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking of the Chalice of his passion. Many reuerence his miracles, few follow the ignominy of his Crosse. Many loue Iesus, as long as aduersities happen not. Many praise and blesse him, as long as they receaue any comfort from, him. But if Iesus hide himselfe, and leaue them but a while, they fall either into complaint, or into too much deiection of mind.

2. But they that loue Iesus for Iesus, and not for some comfort of their owne, blesse him in all tribulation and anguish of hart, as well as in the greatest comfort. And although he should neuer giue them comfort, they

notwithstanding would euer prayse him, & alwaies giue him thankes.

3. O how powerful is the pure loue of Iesus, which is mixed with no selfe-loue nor proper interest! Are they not all to be called hirelings, that euer seek comforts? Doe they not shew themselues, to be rather louers of themselues, then of Christ, that alwaies think of their commodity and gaine? Where may one be found that will serue God without looking for reward?

4. It is hard to find any one so spirituall, that is free from the loue of all earthly thinges. For where is any that is indeed poor in spirit, and free from all affection of creatures? far hence, and from the end of the world is his price. If a man should giue all

his wealth, yet is it nothing. And if he should do great pennance, yet is it little. And if he should attaine to all knowledge; he is yet far off. And if he should haue great vertue, and very feruent deuotion, yet there is much wanting: to wit, one thing, which is moſt neceſſary for him. What is that? That leauing all, he forſake himſelfe, and go perfectlie from himſelfe, and retaine nothing of ſelfe loue. And when he hath done all that he knoweth to be done, let him thinke that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not weigh that much, which might be much eſteemed, but according to truth, let him affirme himſelf to be an vnprofitable ſeruant, as our Sauiour hath ſaid: When you ſhall haue done all thinges that are

commanded you, say: We are vnprofitable seruants. They may be truly poore in spirit and naked, and say with the Prophet: I am alone and poore: yet no man richer, no man more powerfull, no man more free then he that can leaue himselfe and all thinges, and put himselfe in the meanest and lowest place.

Of the high way of the holy Crosse.

CHAPT. XII.

VNto many seemeth harde this speach: Deny thy selfe, take vp thy Crosse, and follow Iesus. But it will be much harder, to heare that last word: Get yee away from me, yee cursed into euerlasting fire. For they that now willingly heare & follow the word of the Crosse, shal

not then feare to heare the ſentence of euerlaſting damnation. This ſigne of the Croſſe ſhall be in heauen, when our Lord ſhall come to iudgment. Then all the ſeruants of the Croſſe, who in their life-time conformed themſelues vnto Chriſt crucified, ſhall draw neere vnto our Lord with great confidence.

1. Why therfore feareſt thou to take vp the Croſſe, which leadeth thee to a kingdome? In the Croſſe is health, in the Croſſe is life, in the Croſſe is protection againſt our enemies; in the Croſſe is infuſion of heauenly ſweetnes, in the Croſſe is ſtrength of mind, in the Croſſe is ioy of ſpirit; in the Croſſe is the height of vertue, in the Croſſe is the perfection of ſanctity. There is no health of the ſoule, nor hope of

euerlasting life but in the Crosse. Take vp therfore thy Crosse and follow Iesus, and thou shalt go into life euerlasting. He is gone before, bearing his Crosse, and is dead for thee on the Crosse, that thou maiest also beare thy Crosse, and desire to dye on the Crosse with him. For if thou dyest with him, thou shalt also liue with him And if thou be his companion in payne, thou shalt be partaker with him also in glory.

3. Behold in the Crosse all doth consist, and all lyeth in ending our life vpon it: for there is no other way vnto life, and vnto true inward peace, but the way of the Holy Crosse, and of daily mortification. Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoeuer thou wilt, thou shalt not find a higher way

aboue, nor a safer way below, then the way of the holy Crosse. Dispose and order all thinges according to thy will, and iudgement: yet thou shalt euer find, that of necessity thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly or against thy will, so as thou shalt neuer fully auoide the Crosse. For either thou shalt feele payne in thy body, or in thy soule tribulation of spirit.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of God, somtimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbours: & which is more, oftentimes thou shalt be irksome to thy self, nether canst thou be deliuered or eased by any remedy or comfort: but so long as pleaseth God, thou oughtest to beare it, For God will haue thee learne to suffer tribulation without com-

fort; and that thou ſubmit thy ſelfe wholy to him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man hath ſo liuely a feeling of the paſſion of Chriſt, as he who hath chanced to ſuffer the like. The croſſe therfore is alwaies ready, and euery where attendeth thee. Thou canſt not eſcape it, whither ſoeuer thou flyeſt, for whereſoeuer thou goeſt, thou carieſt thy ſelf with thee, and ſhalt euer finde thy ſelfe both aboue and below, without and within: which way ſoeuer thou doeſt turne thee, alwayes thou ſhalt find the Croſſe: and euerie where of neceſſity thou muſt haue patience, if thou wilt haue inward peace, and deſerue an euerlaſting Crowne.

5. YF thou beare the Croſſe

willingly, it will beare thee, and lead thee to thy desired end: to wit, where there shalbe an end of suffering, though here there shall not. Yf thou beare it vnwillingly, thou makest for thy selfe a new burthen, and increasest thy loade, and yet notwithstanding thou must beare it. Yf thou cast away one Crosse, without doubt thou shalt finde another, and that perhaps a more heauy.

6. Thinkest thou to escape that, which no man could euer auoyd? Which of the Saints in the world was without Crosses, and tribulations? Verily Iesus Christ our Lord was neuer one houre without paine of suffering, so long as he liued. Christ (saith he) ought to suffer, and rise againe from death, and so

to enter into his glorie: and how doeſt thou ſeeke any other way, then this high way, which is the way of the holy Croſſe?

7. The whole life of Chriſt was a Croſſe and Martyrdome: and doeſt thou ſeeke reſt & ioy? Thou art deceaued, thou art deceaued if thou ſeekeſt any other thing, then to ſuffer tribulation: for this whole mortall life is ful of miſeries, and enuironed on euery ſide with Croſſes. And how much the more one hath profited in ſpirit; ſo much the heauier Croſſes he oftentymes findeth: for the loue he beareth to God, increaſeth the griefe which he endureth for his banishment.

8. But yet this man, though ſo many wayes afflicted, is not without the remedy of ſpirituall con-

conſolation, for the great good which he perceaueth to grow vnto him, by the bearing of his Croſſe. For whileſt he willingly putteth himſelfe vnder it, all the burthen of tribulation, is turned into the confidence of diuine comfort. And how much the more the flesh is waſted by affliction, ſo much the more is the ſpirit ſtrengthened by inward grace. And ſometymes he is ſo comforted with the deſire of tribulation, and aduerſity; for the loue of conforming himſelfe to the Croſſe of Chriſt, that he would not wish at any time, to be without ſorrow and tribulation: becauſe he beleeueth, that ſo much the more gratefull he ſhall be vnto God, how much the more he can ſuffer for him. This is not a worke of humane

vertue, but it is the grace of Christ, that can, & doth so much in fraile flesh: that what naturally it alwaies abhorreth and flyeth, that by feruour of spirit, it taketh hold on and loueth.

9. It is not according to mans inclination to beare the Crosse, to loue the Crosse, to chastice and subdue the body, to fly honors, to suffer contumelies with a ioyfull hart, to despise himself, and to wish to be despised, to beare all aduersities, and domages, and to desire no prosperity in this world. Yf thou considerest thy selfe, thou shalt be able to performe no such matter of thy selfe. But if thou trustest in our Lord, strength shall be giuen thee from heauen, and the world and flesh, shall be made subiect to thy commaund. Neither shalt

thou feare thy enemy the Diuel, if thou be armed with faith, & signed with the Crosse of Christ.

10. Resolue therfore with thy selfe, like a good and faithfull seruant of Christ, to beare manfully the Crosse of thy Lord, who was crucified for thy loue. Prepare thy selfe to beare many aduersities and diuers kinds of troubles in this miserable life: for so it wilbe with thee, whersoeuer thou be: & so surely thou wilt finde it, whereſoeuer thou hide thy selfe. So it must be, and there is no remedy, or meanes to auoide tribulation and sorrow, but to beare them. Drinke of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou wilt be his friend, and desireſt to haue part with him. Leaue the desire of comforte, to God: let him doe ther-

in as shall beſt pleaſe him. Set thou thy hart vpon the ſuffering of tribulations, and account the the greateſt comfortes, for that the paſſions of this life, are not condigne to future glory, although thou alone couldeſt ſuffer them all.

11. When thou shalt come to this eſtate, that tribulation shall ſeeme ſweet, and pleaſant vnto thee for Chriſt, then thou maiſt thinke it is wel with thee, for thou haſt found a Paradiſe vpon earth. As long as it is grieuous vnto thee to ſuffer, and that thou deſireſt to fly it, ſo long shalt thou be ill at eaſe: & the tribulation thou flyeſt, will follow thee euery where.

12. If thou ſetleſt thy ſelfe to that thou oughteſt, to witt, to ſuffer, and to dy to thy ſelfe, it

vil quickly be better with thee, and thou shalt finde peace. Although thou shouldest haue bene rapt euen vnto the thirde heauen with S. Paul, thou art not for this assured, that thou shalt suffer no contradiction. I (saith Iesus) will shew him how great thinges he must suffer for my name. It resteth therfore, that thou suffer, if thou wilt loue Iesus, and perpetually serue him.

13. O, would to God, thou wert worthy to suffer somthing for Iesus! how great glory would it be vnto thee, what ioy to all the Saints of God, how great edification also to thy neighbour! For all do commend patience though few desir to suffer. With great reason thou ougtest to be willing to suffer a little for Christ; since many suffer far

greater thinges for the loue of the world.

14 Know for certaine, that thou ougteſt to lead a dyinge life. And how much the more euery one dieth to himſelfe; ſoe much the more doth he begin to liue to God. No man is fit to attaine vnto heauenly thinges, vnleſſe he ſubmit himſelf to the bearing of aduerſities for Chriſt. Nothing is more gratefull vnto God, nothing more wholeſome to thee in this world, then to ſuffer willingly for Chriſt. And if it were in thy choyce, thou ſhouldeſt rather wish to ſuffer aduerſities for Chriſt, then to enioy the delight of many comforts: becauſe by theſe meanes thou ſhouldeſt be more like vnto Chriſt, and more conformable to all the ſaints. For our merit, &

the perfection of our estate, consisteth not in much sweetnes and comforts, but rather in suffering great afflictions and tribulations.

15. If there had ben any better thing, and more profitable to the health of man then suffering, surely Christ would haue shewed it by word, & exãple. But he planely exhorted all the disciples that followed him, and all that desire to follow him, to the bearing of the Crosse, and saith: If any man will come after me, let him deny himselfe and take vp his Crosse, and follow me. So as when we haue read and searched all, let this be the last conclusion: That by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdome of God.

THE THIRD BOOKE.

Of the inward speach of Christ vnto a faithfull soule.

CHAP. I.

I Will heare what our Lord God will speak in me. Blessed is the soule that heareth our Loord speaking in her: and receaueth from his mouth, the word of comfort. Blessed are those eares that receaue the sound of the diuine voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world. Blessed indeed are those eares that harken not to the voice which sour-

deth outwardly, but vnto truth which teacheth inwardly. Blessed are the eies that being shut vp to outward thinges, are attentiue to those things that are internall. Blessed are they that enter into the inward thinges, and indeauour to prepare themselues more and more by daily exercises to the attaining of heauenly secrets. Blessed be they that delight to attend to the seruice of God, and cast from them all impediments of this world.

2. Consider these thinges, my soule, and shut vp the dore of thy sensuall desires: that thou maist heare what thy Lord God speakes in thee. Thus saith thy beloued: I am thy safety, thy peace, and thy life. Keepe thy selfe with me, and thou shalt find peace. Forsake all transitory

thinges, and seeke those that be euerlasting. What are temporall thinges, but deceauing snares? and what do all creatures auaile thee, if thou bee forsaken by the Creatour? Forsake therefore all earthly thinges, and labour to please thy Creatour, & be faithfull vnto him, that thou maist attaine vnto true happines.

That truth speaketh inwardlie without noyse of Wordes.

CHAP. II.

SPeake Lord, for thy seruant heareth. I am thy seruant graunt me vndestanding, that I may know thy testimonies. Stir vp my hart to heare the wordes of thy mouth. Let thy speach descend as the dew into my soule. The children of Israel

times paſt ſaid vnto Moyſes: Speak thou vnto vs, and we shal heare thee: Let not our Lord ſpeake vnto vs, leaſt perhaps we dye. Not ſo Lord, not ſo I beſeeche thee, but rather with the Prophet Samuel. I humbly and earneſtly intreat: ſpeak Lord, for thy ſeruant heareth, Let not Moyſes ſpeake vnto me, nor any of the Prophets, but thou rather ſpeake, my Lord God, the inſpirer, and enlightener of all the Prophets: for thou alone without them, canſt perfectly inſtruct me, but they without thee, can profit nothing.

2. They can pronounce wordes, but they giue not ſpirit. They ſpeak maruelous wel, but if thou hold thy peace, they inflame not the hart. They deliuer the letters, but thou openeſt

the ſenſe. They bring forth myſteries, but thou diſcloſeſt the vnderſtanding of ſealed thinges. They declare thy commaundements, but thou helpeſt to fulfil them. They ſhew the way, but thou giueſt ſtrength to walke in it. They worke only exteriourly, but thou inſtructeſt & enlightneſt the hartes. They water outwardly, but thou giueſt fruitfulnes. They ſound forth wordes, but thou giueſt vnderſtãding to the hearing.

3. Let not therfore Moyſes ſpeake vnto me, but thou my Lord God, the euerlaſting truth, leaſt perhaps I ſhould dye, and become without fruit, if I be warmed outwardly only, & not inflamed within: leaſt the word heard and not fulfilled, knowen and not loued, beleeued and not

obſerued, should increaſe my iudgment. Speak therefore Lord, for thy ſeruant heareth, for thou haſt the wordes of euerlaſtinge life. Speake vnto me to the comfort of my ſoule, and to the amendment of my whole life: & to thy prayſe and glory, & euerlaſting honor.

That the wordes of God are to be heard with humilnty, and that many weigh them not.

CHAPT. III.

SOnne heare my words, words of great comfort, excelling al the knowledg of the Philoſophers and wiſe men of this world. My wordes are ſpirit and life, not to be weighed by the vnderſtanding of man. They are not to be drawne to vaine li-

king, but to be heard with ſilēce, and to be receaued with all humility and great affection. And I ſaid: Bleſſed is the man whom shou shalt inſtruct, O Lord, and shalt teach thy law, that thou maiſt giue him quietnes from euil daies, & that he be not deſtroyed vpon earth.

2. I (ſaith our Lord) haue taught the Prophets from the beginning, and ceaſe not continually to ſpeake to euery one: but many are deafe, and giue no eare to my ſpeach. The greater number doe more willingly liſten to the world, then to God: & follow ſooner the deſires of their flesh, then the wil of God. The world promiſeth temporall and ſmall thinges, and is ſerued with great diligence: I promiſe most high and eternall things,

and the hartes of men are nothing moued with it. Who is he that serueth and obeyeth me with equall care to that with which the world, and the Lords therof, are serued? Blush Sidon, (saith the sea.) And if thou aske the cause, heare wherfore. For a little prebend, a long iorney is vndertaken: for euerlasting life many will scarce once lift a foote from the ground. A thing of small value is sought after greedily: for a penny sometimes there is great contention: for a vaine thing and sleight promise, men cease not to toile day and night.

3. But alas for an vnchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and glory without end, they are loath to take the least paines.

Blush therefore slouthfull and complayning seruant, that they are found more ready to distruction, then thou to life. They reioyce more at vanity, then thou at truth. And yet they are sometimes frustrated of their hope: but my promise deceaueth none, nor sendeth him away empty that trusteth in me. I will giue that which I haue promised. I will fulfill that which I haue said; but to him that remaines faithfull in my loue to the end. I am the rewarde of all good, and do try my deuout seruantes in forcible proofes.

4. Write my wordes in thy hart, and thinke diligently of them: for they will be necessary in time of temptation What thou vnderstandest not when thou readest, thou shalt know in the day

day of visitation. Iam wont to visit my elect two seuere alwaies, to wit, with temptation, and comfort. And I dayly read two lessons vnto them, one reprehēding their vices, another exhorting them to the increase of vertues. He that hath my words & despiseth them, hath within himselfe that shall iudge him at the last day.

A prayer to implore the grace of deuotion.

5. Lord my God, thou art all that I can desire. Who am I, that dare speak vnto thee? I am thy poorest seruant, and a most vile worme: much more poore and contemptible, then I can or dare expresse. Remember Lord that Iam nothing, haue nothing, and can do nothing. Thou alone art good, iust and holy, thou canst

doe all thinges, performeſt all thinges, leauing only a ſinner voide of all good. Call to mind thy mercies, & fill my hart with thy grace, who wilt not that thy workes be empty.

6. How can I ſupport my ſelf in this miſerable life, vnleſſe thy mercy and grace comfort me? Turne not thy face from me: delay not thy viſitation; draw not away thy comfort, leaſt my ſoule become as earth without water vnto thee. Lord teach me to fulfil thy wil; teach me to liue worthily and humbly in thy ſight; for thou art my wiſdome, thou doſt perfectly knowe me, and didſt know me before the world was made, and before I was borne into the world.

That we ought to liue in truth and humilitie in the sight of God.

CHAPT. IV.

SOnne, walke in my sight in sincerity and truſt; and euer seeke me in playnes of hart. He that walkes in my sight in truth, shall be defended from euil incurſions, and truth shal deliuer him from seducers, and from the detractions of the wicked. If truth shall haue deliured thee, thou shalt be truly free, and shalt not care for vaine speaches of men. Lord it is true, according as thou saiſt, so I beseech thee let it be done with me, and keepe me, and bring me to a happy end. Let thy truth teach me, and let it deliuer me from all euill affection and inordinat loue: and

I shal walke with thee in great freedome of hart.

2. I will teach thee (sayth the Truth) those thinges that are right and pleasing in my sight. Thinke of thy sinnes with great sorrow, and grief, and neuer esteeme thy selfe any thing for thy good works. Thou art in verie deed à sinner, and subiect to many passions. Of thy selfe thou alwaies tendest to nothing, and art quickly cast downe & ouercome: quickly troubled, quickly dissolued. Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst glory, but many thinges for which thou oughtest to humble, and despise thy self: for thou art much weaker, then thou art able to comprehend.

3. And therefore let nothing seeme much vnto thee, what-

ſoeuer thou doeſt. Let nothing ſeeme great, nothing precious, and wonderfull, nothing worthy of eſtimation: nothing high, nothing truly commendable, and to be deſired, but that which is euerlaſting. Let the eternall Truth aboue all thinges pleaſe thee. Let thy owne great vnworthines alwaies diſpleaſe thee. Feare nothing, blame, and fly nothing ſo much, as thy ſinnes, and vices: which ought to diſpleaſe thee more, thē the loſſe of any thing whatſoeuer. Some walke not ſincerly in my ſighr, but led by a certaine curioſity, and pride, will know my ſecrets, and vnderſtand the high myſteries of God, neglecting themſelues and their owne ſaluation. Theſe oftentimes (for that I reſiſt them) do fall into

great temptations and ſinnes, for their pride and curioſity.

4. Feare the iudgment of God, dread the wrath of the almighty. But diſcuſſe not the workes of the Higheſt. Search thine owne iniquities, in how much thou haſt offended, and how much good thou haſt neglected. Some carry their deuotion only in bookes, ſome in pictures, ſome in outward ſignes and figures, ſome haue me in their mouths, but little in their harts. There are others that being illuminated in their vnderſtanding, and purged in their affection, do alwaies aſpire with an earneſt mind to euerlaſting hapines: and are vnwilling to heare of the things of this world, and do ſerue the neceſſities of nature with griefe; and theſe preceaue what the ſpirit of

truth speaketh in them. Because it teacheth them to despise earthly, and loue heauenly things: to neglect the world, and day and night to desire heauen.

Of the wonderfull effect of diuine grace.

CHAP. V.

I Praise thee, O heauenly Father, Father of my Lord Iesus Christ, for that thou hast vouchsafed to remember me a poore and wretched creature. O Father of mercies end God of all cõfort, thankes be vnto thee, who somtimes with thy comfort refreshest me, vnworthy of all comfort. I euer blesse & glorify thee with thy only begotten Sonne, and the holy Ghost for euer. O God

my Lord, the holy louer of my ſoule, when thou ſhalt come into my hart, all that is within me will reioyce. Thou art my glorie, and the exultation of my hart. Thou art my hope, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But for that I am yet weake in loue, and imperfect in vertue. I haue neede to be comforted by thee: viſit me therfore often, and inſtructe me with thy holy diſcipline. Deliuer me from euill paſſions, and heale my hart of all inordinate affections: that beinge cured within, and well purged, I may be made fit to loue, ſtrong to ſuffer, and conſtant to perſeuere.

3. Loue is a great matter, in very truth a great good, which alone maketh euery thinge that is heauy, light; and beareth equally, vnequall burthens. For it

carrieth a burthen without a burthen, and maketh euery thinge that is bitter, ſweet, and delightſome. The noble loue of Ieſus, enforceth man to worke great thinges, and ſtyrreth him vp to deſire allwaies the moſt perfect. Loue will be aloft, and not kept downe with any baſe thinges. Loue will be free from all worldlie affection, to the ende his inward ſight be not obſcured that he be not intangled with the deſire of any tranſitory gaine, or troubled with the want therof. Nothing is ſweeter then loue, nothing ſtronger, nothing higher, nothinge more ample, nothing more pleaſant, nothing fuller nor better in heauen or in earth: for that loue hath his beginnig from God, & cannot reſt but in God aboue all creatures.

4. He that loueth, flyeth, runneth, and reioyceth; he is free & not held in. He giueth all for all, and hath all in all, for that he reſteth in one Higheſt aboue all, from which all good floweth & proceedeth. He reſpecteth not the guifts, but turneth himſelfe aboue all goods vnto the giuer. Loue oftentimes knoweth no meaſure, but inflameth aboue al meaſure. Loue feeleth no burthen, waigheth no paines, deſireth aboue its ſtrength, complaineth not of impoſſibility, for that it thinketh all things lawful, and poſſible. It is therfore able to vndertake al things, & performeth and bringeth many things to effect: whereas he that doth not loue, fainteth & can do nothing.

5. Loue alwaies watcheth, and ſleeping ſleepeth not; being

wearied, is not tyred, straitned is not pressed: frighted, is not troubled: but like a liuely flame, and burning torch, breaketh vpwardes, and passeth through al with great security. If any one loueth, he knoweth what this voice crieth. A lowd cry in the eares of God, is the burning loue of the soule, which saith: My God, my loue, thou art wholy mine, and I wholy thine.

6. Enlarge me in loue, that my hart may tast how sweet it is to loue, and to be dissolued, and swimme in thy loue. Let me be possessed by loue, mounting aboue my selfe, with excessiue feruour, and admiration. Let me sing the song of loue, let me follow thee on high my beloued, let my soule faint in thy praises reioycing with loue. Let me loue

thee more then my ſelfe, and not my ſelfe but for thee, and all in thee, that truly loue thee, as the law of loue commandeth which shineth in thee.

7. Loue is ſwift, ſincere, pious, ſweet and delightfull: ſtronge, patient, faithfull, prudent, ſuffering, full of courage, and neuerſeeking it ſelfe. For where one ſeeketh himſelfe, there he falleth from loue. Loue is circumſpect, humble, and vpright: not remiſſe, not mutable, nor attending vnto vaine things: ſober, chaſt, conſtant, quiet, and guarded in all the ſenſes. Loue is ſubiect, and obedient to Superiours, meane and abiect to it ſelfe, deuout and thankfull vnto God, truſtinge and hoping alwaies in him, euen then, when God imparteth no ſweetnes vnto it: for

without ſorrow, none liueth in loue.

8. He that is not ready to ſuffer all thinges, and ſtand to the will of his beloued, is not worthy to be called a louer. A louer ought to imbrace willingly all that is harde and diſtaſtfull, for his beloued; and not to turne away from him, for any contrarie accidents.

Of the proofe of a true Louer.

CHAP. VI.

SOnne, thou art not yet a ſtrõg & prudent louer. Wherfore Lord? Becauſe thou giueſt ouer for a ſmall aduerſity, and too earneſtly ſeekeſt comfort. A conſtant louer ſtandeth firmely in temptations, and giueth not cre-

dit to the crafty perſuaſions of the enemy. As I pleaſe him in proſperity, ſo I am not vnpleaſant to him in aduerſity.

2. A prudent louer, conſidereth not ſo much the guift of his louer, as the loue of the giuer. He rather eſteemeth the good will, then the value, and placeth all guifts vnder his beloued. A noble louer reſteth not in the gift, but in me aboue any gift. All therefore is not loſt if ſometimes thou haſt leſſe taſt of me and my Saints then thou wouldeſt. That good and ſweete deſire which thou ſometimes feeleſt, is the effect of preſent grace, and a certaine taſt of the heauenlie Country: wheron thou muſt not rely too much, for it goeth and commeth. But to fight againſt euill motions of the mind

which may happen vnto thee, and to despise the suggestion of the diuell, is a signe of vertue & great merit.

3. Let not therefore strange fancies forced into thee, of any matter whatsoeuer, trouble thee. Retaine a firme purpose and an vpright intention to God. Neither is it an illusion that sometimes thou art suddainly rapt on high, and presently returnest againe vnto the accustomed vanities of thy hart. For thou dost rather vnwillingly suffer them, then commit them: and as long as they displease thee, and thou striuest against them, it is a merit, and no losse.

4. Know that thy ancient enemy, doth euer striue to hinder thy desire to good, and to diuert thee from all deuout exercise:

to wit, from the worshiping of Saints, from the deuout memorie of my passion, from the profitable remembrance of thy sinnes, from the guard of thine owne hart, & from the firme purpose of profiting in vertue. He thrusteth many euill thoughtes into thy mind, that he may cause a wearisomnes, and horrour in thee, to draw thee frō deuout prayer and reading. Humble cōfession is displeasing vnto him, & if he could, he would cause thee to cease from receauing the Sacrament of my Body. Trust him not, nor care for him; although he should often set snares of deceipt to intrap thee. Charge him with it, when he suggesteth euil, & vnclean thoughts vnto thee. Say vnto him: Auant filthy spirit, blushe miserable wretch, thou art filthy that bring-

est

geſt ſuch things vnto mine eares. Away from me wicked deceaſuer, thou shalt haue no part in me: but Ieſus shal be with me as a ſtrong warriour, and thou shalt remaine confunded. I had rather die & vndergo any torment, thē to conſent vnto thee. Hold thy peace & be ſilent. I wil hear thee no more, though thou shouldeſt vorke me many troubles. My Lord is my light and ſaluation, vhom shall I feare? If vhole armies should ſtand together againſt me, my hart shal not feare. Our Lord is my helper, and my Redeemer.

5. Fight like a good ſouldiar; & if thou ſomtimes fal through frailty, recouer greater forces thē before, truſtinge in my more aboundant grace: and take great heede of vaine pleaſinge of thy

ſelfe, and pride. This brings manie into errour, and makes them ſomtimes fal into almoſt incurable blindnes. Let the fall of the proud, foolishly preſuminge of themſelues, ſerue thee for a warning, and a perpetuall humiliation.

That grace is to be hid vnder the veile of Humility.

CHAP. VII.

SOnne, it is more profitable, and ſafe for thee to hide the grace of deuotion, not to extoll thy ſelfe, nor to ſpeake much, nor to eſteeme much thereof: but rather to deſpiſe thy ſelfe, and feare it, as giuen to one vnworthy thereof. This affection is not to be cleaued vnto, that

may be quickly changed into the contrary. Thinke when thou art in grace, how miſerable and needie thou art wont to be without it. Nether doth therin only conſiſt the profit of ſpirituall life, when thou haſt the grace of comfort; but when thou humbly, reſignedly, and patiently ſuffereſt the withdrawing therof: ſo that thou be not then leſſe diligent in the exerciſe of prayer, nor ſuffer thy ſelfe to paſſe ouer the reſt of thy accuſtomed good works: but that thou willingly performe what lieth in thee, accordinge as thou art able & vnderſtandeſt to be fit: not neglecting thy ſelfe wholy for the drineſſe, and trouble of mind, which thou feeleſt.

2. There are many that when it ſucceedeth not well with them, preſently they become impa-

tient or slouthfull. The way of man is not alwaies in his power but it belongeth to God, to giue, and to comfort when he will, how much he will, and whom he wil, as it shall please him, and no more. Some vnaduised persons haue ouerthrown themselues for the greedy desire which they had of the grace of deuotion, attemptinge more then they were able to performe, not waighing the measure of their weakenes, but following rather the desire of their hart, then the iudgment of reason. And because they presumed on greater matters then was pleasing to God, they quickly lost his grace. They were made needy, and left in a deiected estate that built themselues nests in heauen, to the ende that being humbled, and impo-

nerished, they may learne not to fly with their owne winges, but to liue in hope vnder my feathers. They that are yet new, and vnacquainted in the way of our Lord, vnles they gouerne themselues by the counsaile of discret persons; may easily be deceaued and ouerthrowne.

3. And if they will rather follow their owne iudgment, then giue credit to others that are experienced, their ende will be dangerous, if they cannot be drawn from their owne conceipt. Seldome those that are wise in their owne opinion, suffer themselues humby to be gouerned by others. A little knowledge with humilitie, and a slender vnderstandinge, is better then greate treasures of learning with a vaine selfe-likinge. It is better for

thee to haue leſſe, then much, of that wherof thou maiſt be proud. He doth not diſcreetly, that wholy giueth himſelfe ouer to mirth, forgetting his former pouerty, & the chaſt feare of God, which feareth to looſe the grace which he hath obteyned. Nether is he vertuouſly wiſe, that in time of aduerſity or any tribulation whatſoeuer, yeildeth to deſpairing thoughts, and thinketh and imagineth of me leſſe confidently then he ought.

4. He that will be ouer ſecure in time of peace, ſhall be often found in time of warre too dejected and fearfull: If thou couldeſt alwaies continue humble, and lowly within thy ſelfe, and temper, and gouerne thy ſoule wel, thou ſhouldeſt not ſo ſoone fall into danger and offence. It

is good counsel, that when thou conceaueſt feruour of ſpirit, thou shouldeſt thinke what will become of thee, when that light shall leaue thee. And when that doth happen, remember the light may returne againe, which for thy inſtruction and my glorie, I haue withdrawne for a time.

5. Such proofe is often more profitable, then if thou shouldeſt alwaies enioy proſperitie according to thy deſire. For merits are not to be waighed in a man by the number of viſions and comforts which he hath, or by his knowledge in Scriptures, or by his being placed in high degree: but in that he is grounded in true humility, and replenished with diuine charity: if he alwaies purely and entirely ſeeke the honour of God, if he eſteeme him-

ſelfe nothing, and with a ſincere hart deſpiſe himſelfe, & reioyce more to be deſpiſed & humbled by others, then to be honored.

Of a meane conceipt of our ſelues in the ſight of God.

CHAPT. VIII.

SHall I ſpeake vnto my Lord, ſith I am duſt and ashes? If I eſteeme better of my ſelfe, behold thou ſtandeſt againſt me, & my iniquities beare true witnes: nether can I ſpeake againſt it. But if I abaſe and eſteeme nothing of my ſelfe, and caſt off all ſelfe conceipt, and (as Iam) accompt my ſelfe to be duſt, thy grace will be fauourable vnto me, and thy light will be neere vnto my hart: and all eſtimation

how little ſoeuer, shalbe ſwallowed vp in the depth of my nothing, and perish euerlaſtingly. There thou shewest my ſelfe vnto me, what I am, what I haue bene, and whither I am come: for alas I am nothing: & I knew it not. And if I be left to my ſelf, behold I become nothing and a maſſe of infirmity. But if thou ſuddainly looke vpon me, I am preſently made ſtronge and filled with new ioy. And it is a great meruaile, that I am ſo ſuddainly lifted vp, & ſo graciouſly imbraced by thee, that of mine owne waight, allwaies ſinke downeward.

2. Thy loue is cauſe hereof, freely preuenting me, and releeuing me in ſo many neceſſities, preſeruinge me alſo from grieuous dangers, and (as I may true-

ly ſay) deliuering me from innumerable euills. For ſurely by euil louing my ſelf, I loſt my ſelfe: and by ſeeking thee alone, & ſincerely louing thee, I haue found both my ſelf & thee, and for thy loue haue more deeply brought my ſelfe to nothing. For, that thou, O moſt ſweet Ieſu, dealeſt with me aboue all deſert, and aboue all that I dare hope and requeſt.

3. Bleſſed be thou my God; for although I be vnworthy of all good, yet the noblenes of thy bounty & thy infinite goodnes, neuer ceaſeth to do good euen to the vngratefull, and to them that be turned away far frō thee, Turne vs vnto thee O Lord that we may be gratefull, humble, & deuout: for thou art our ſafety, our power, and our ſtrength.

That all thinges are to be referred vnto God as vnto the last end.

CHAPT. IX.

SOnne I ought to be thy chiefest and last end, if thou desire to be truly blessed. With this intention thy affection shall be purified, which is oftentimes inclined inordinately to it selfe, and vnto creatures. For if in any thing thou seeke thy selfe, thou presently faintest and driest vp within thyselfe. Direct therfore all thinges chiefly vnto me, for I am he that haue giuen all. Consider euery thinge as flowing frō the highest good, and therfore all things are to be reduced vnto me as vnto their first beginninge.

2. Out of me, as out of liuing

fountaines, the litle & the great, the poore and the rich, do draw the water of life: and they that willingly, and freely ſerue me, ſhall receaue grace for grace. But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any particuler good, ſhall not be grounded in true ioy, nor enlarged in his hart, but shal be many waies hindred & ſtraitned. Thou oughteſt therfore to aſcribe no good vnto thy ſelfe, nor attribute the praiſe of vertue vnto any man, but giue all vnto God, without whom man hath nothing. I haue beſtowed all, and will that all be returned to me againe: and with great ſeuerity I require thanks.

3. This is the truth, that putteth to flight vaine glory. And if heauenly grace, and true charitie enter in, there shall be no

enuy nor grudging of hart, neyther shall there be any place for selfe loue. For diuine charity ouercommeth all, and enlargeth all the forces of the soule. If thou vnderstand aright, in me alone thou wilt reioyce, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good, but God alone, who is to be praised aboue all thinges, and to be blessed in all.

That despising the world, it is sweet to serue God.

CHAPT. X.

NOw I will speake againe o Lord, & will not be silent. I wil say in the eares of my God, my Lord, and my Kinge that is on high: O how great is the multitude of thy sweetnes o Lord,

which thou haſt hidden for thoſe that feare thee! But what art thou to them that loue thee? What to them that ſerue thee with their whole hart? Truely vnſpeakable is the ſweetnes of thy contemplation, which thou beſtoweſt on then that loue thee. In this chiefly thou haſt shewed me the ſweetnes of thy charity, for that when I was not, thou madeſt me & when I went aſtray far off from thee, thou broughteſt me back againe, that I might ſerue thee: and haſt commanded me to loue thee.

2. O fountaine of euerlaſting loue, what shall I ſay of thee? How can I forget thee, that haſt vouchſafed to remẽber me, euen when I withered away and perished! Thou haſt vſed mercy with thy ſeruant beyond all

expectation of my hart: and hast bestowed thy grace and friendship beyond all merit. What shal I returne vnto thee for this grace? For it is not graunted to euerie one to forsake all thinges, to renounce the world, and to vndertake a life of religion & perfection. Is it much that I serue thee, whō al creatures are bound to serue? It ought not to seeme much vnto me to serue thee: but this rather seemeth much, and merualious vnto me, that thou vouchsafest to receaue into thy seruice one so poore and vnworthy, and to ioyne him with thy beloued seruants.

3. Behold all is thine which I haue, and wherby I serue thee. And yet in very deed thou rather seruest me, then I thee. Behold heauen & earth, which thou hast

created for the ſeruice of man are ready at hand, and do daily performe whatſoeuer thou doſt command; & this is litle: yea thou haſt alſo appointed the Angels to the ſeruice of man. But that which exceedeth all, is, that thou thy ſelfe haſt vouchſafed to ſerue man, and promiſed to giue thy ſelfe vnto him.

4. What ſhall I giue thee for all theſe thouſands of benefits? I would I could ſerue thee all the dayes of my life! I would I were able at leaſt for one day, to doe thee ſome worthy and acceptable ſeruice! Thou art truly worthy of all ſeruice, of all honour and euerlaſting praiſe. Thou art my Lord, & I thy poore ſeruant, that am bound to ſerue thee with all my forces, neither ought I euer to ceaſe to praiſe thee. And

this

this I wish to doe, this I desire: and whatsoeuer is wanting vnto me, vouchsafe I beseech thee to supply.

5. It is a great honour, a verie great glory to serue thee, and to despise all thinges for thee. For great grace shall be giuen to them, that shal willingly subiect themselues vnto thy most holy seruice. They shall receaue most sweet comfort of the holy Ghost, that for thy loue shall renounce all carnall delightes. They shall attaine great freedome of mind, that for thy names sake shall enter into the narrow way, and shall haue left off all care of this world.

6. O sweete and delightfull seruitude of God, by which man is truly made free and holy: O sacred state of religious bondage,

which maketh man equall to Angels, pleasinge to God, terrible to diuels, and gratefull, and of great esteeme to all the faithfull: O seruice to be imbraced, & alwaies wished for, by which we obtaine the greatest good, and attaine to that ioy which neuer shall haue end!

That the desires of our hart are to be examined and moderated.

CHAPT. XI.

SOnne, thou oughtest to learne many thinges more, which thou hast not yet well learned. What are those Lord? That thou frame thy desire wholy according to my pleasure: and be not a louer of thy selfe but a diligent follower of my will Thy desires

oftentimes do ſtir thee vp, and driue thee forwards with violēce: but conſider whether thou art moued rather for my honour, then for thine owne profit. If I be the cauſe, thou wilt be well content with whatſoeuer I ſhall ordaine: but if there lurk de in thee any ſelfe inclination, beholde this is it that hindreth thee, and waygheth thee downe.

2. Beware therefore thou incline not too much vpon any deſire that commeth to thy minde, before thou aske my counſell leaſt perhaps afterwards it repent thee, and that thou beginne now to diſlike that which before did pleaſe thee, and which thou earneſtly deſiredſt as the beſt. For euery affection that ſeemeth good, is not preſently to be followed: not euery contrary affec-

tion, at the first to be fled. It is expedient sometimes to vse a restraint euen in good desires and endeauours, least by importunity thou incur distraction of minde, and by euill example become a scandall vnto others: or beinge gainsaid by others, thou be suddainly troubled and fall.

3. Yet sometimes thou oughtest to vse violence, & resist manfully thy sensual appetites, & respect not what thy body would, or would not: but rather to labour, that euen perforce it be subiect to the spirit. And it is to be chasticed so longe, and to be forced vnder seruitude, vntill it readily obey in all thinges, and learne to be content with a litle, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and not to murmure against any inconuenience.

Of the effect of Patience, and of strife against Concupiscence.

CHAPT. XII.

LOrd God, I preceaue patience is very necessary vnto me, for that many aduersities do happen in this life. Howsoeuer I shall dispose of my peace, my life cannot be without warre and affliction. So it is Sonne. And my will is not, that thou seeke after that peace which is voyd of temptations, or that feeleth no contraryeties; but then thinke that thou hast found peace when thou art exercised with sundry tribulations, and tried in many aduersities.

2. If thou say that thou art not able to suffer much, how

then wilt thou endure the fire of Purgatory? Of two euils, the leſſe is alwaies to be choſen. That thou maiſt therefore auoid euerlaſting punishments in the next world, endeauour to ſuffer patiently for God, the preſent euils of this. Doeſt thou thinke that men of this world ſuffer little or nothing? Thou art deceaded. Looke into the life euen of them that liue in greateſt delicaties, and thou shalt find otherwiſe. But thou wilt ſay they haue many delights, and follow their owne wils, & therfore they make ſmall accompt of their tribulations. Be it ſo, that they haue whatſoeuer they will; but how long doſt thou thinke it will laſt?

3. Behold the wealthy of this world vanish away like ſmoke, and there shal be no memory of

their ioyes past. Yea euen while they liue also, they rest not in them without griefe, irksomnesse, and feare, For the selfe same thinge in which they take their delight, is oftentimes the cause of sorrow vnto them and much affliction. They haue their desert, who for that they immoderately seeke, and follow delights, they do not obtaine them, but with shame and sorrow.

4. O how short and deceiptful, how inordinate, and filthy are those pleasures? Yea so sēseles & blind are men that they vnderstād it not: but like dumbe beasts, for a little pleasure of a corruptible life, they incur the eternall death of their soule. Do not thou therfore, my Sonne, follow the disordinate inclination of thy corrupt nature, but forsake thine

owne will. Delight in our Lord, and he wil giue thee the desires of thy hart.

5. If thou desire true delight, and to be more plentifully comforted by me, behold, in the contempt of all wordly things, and in the cuttinge off base deligts, shal be thy blessings, and aboundant comforts shall be giuen thee. And how much the more thou withdraweſt thy selfe from all comfort of creatures, so much the sweeter and more forcible consolations shalt thou find in me. But at first thou canst not attaine vnto them without a certaine griefe, labour, and strife. The olde custome will make resistance, & thou must ouercome it with another custome that is better. Thy flesh will murmure but thou must bridle it with fer-

uour of spirit. The olde serpent will sting and trouble thee, but by praier he shal be put to flight: and with profitable labour thou shalt shut the dore against him.

Of the humble obedience of a subiect according to the example of Christ.

CHAP. XIII.

SOnne, he that endeauoureth to withdraw himselfe from obedience, withdraweth himself from grace. And he that seeketh to haue thinges in priuate, shall loose the common. He that doth not willingly and freely submit himselfe to his Superiour, it is a signe that his flesh is not yet perfectly obedient vnto him, but oftentimes rebelleth & murmu-

reth against him. Learne therefore readily to submit thy selfe to thy Superiour, if thou desiredst to subdue thy passions. For the outward enemy is sooner ouercome, if the inward man be in good estate. There is no worse enemy, nor more troublesome to the soule, then thou vnto thy selfe, not agreeing well with the spirit. Thou must of necessity haue a true contempt of thy self, if thou wilt preuaile against flesh and bloud.

2. Because thou loueſt thy selfe as yet too inordinatly, therfore thou art afraide to resigne thy selfe wholy to the wil of others. But what greate matter is it, if thou that art dust, and nothing, submitteſt thy selfe to a man for God, when I the Almighty and higheſt Soueraigne, who crea-

ted all things of nothing, humbly ſubmitted my ſelf vnto man for thee? I became the moſt humble and abiect of all men, that thou mighteſt ouercome thy pride with my humility. Learne to obey thou that art duſt. Learne to humble thy ſelfe thou earth and clay, and put thy ſelfe vnder the feet of all men. Learne to break thine owne will, and to yeilde thy ſelfe to all ſubiection.

3. Take courage againſt thy ſelfe, and ſuffer not pride to liue in thee: but humble and ſubmit thy ſelf to al, that euery one may goe ouer thee, and tread thee as durt of the ſtreets vnder their feete. Vaine man, what canſt thou complaine of? what canſt thou anſwere foule ſinner, to them that reproue thee, who haſt ſo often offended God, & ſo many times

deſerued hell? But mine eye hath ſpared thee, becauſe thy ſoule was pretious in my ſight: that thou mighteſt knowe my loue, and alwaies remaine grateful for my benefits: that thou mighteſt continually giue thy ſelfe to true ſubiection and humility, and mighteſt beare patiently the contempt of thy ſelfe.

Of the ſecret Iudgment of God to be conſidered, leaſt we be extolled in our good deeds.

CHAP. XIV.

THou thundreſt thy iudgements ouer me, o Lord, and shakeſt all my bones with feare and trembling: my ſoule is ſore afraid. I ſtand aſtonished, & conſider, that the heauens are not pure in thy ſight. If thou haſte

found wickednes in Angels, and hast not pardoned them, what shall become of me? Stars fell frō heauen, and what do I presume that am dust? They whose works seemed laudable, fell into the lowest: and I haue seene them, that did eate bread of Angels, delighted with the huskes of swyne.

2. There is no sanctity, if thou o Lord, withdrawest thy hand. No wisedome auaileth, if thou ceasest to gouerne No strength helpeth, if thou leauest to defend. No chastity secure, if thou doest not protect it. No custody of our owne profitable, if thy sacred watchfulnes be not present. For if thou leauest vs, we sinke, and perish: but if thou vouchsafest to visit vs, we are raised vp, and do enioy life. We are

inconſtant, but by thee we are ſtrenghtned: we waxe cold, but by thee we receaue heate.

3. O how meanely and baſely ought I to thinke of my ſelfe! how little, yea nothing ought I to eſteeme it, if I ſeeme to haue any good! O Lord, how ought I to ſubmit my ſelfe vnder thy vnſearchable Iudgments: where I find my ſelfe to be nothing els, but nothing, and nothing! O vnmeaſurable waight oſea that can neuer be paſſed ouer, where I find my ſelf only and wholy nothing! Where then is the lurking hole of glory? Wher is the confidence conceaued of vertue? Al vayne glory is ſwallowed vp in the depth of thy Iudgments, which hang ouer my head.

4. What is all flesh in thy ſight? Shall clay glory againſt

him that frameth it? How can he be lifted vp with vaine wordes, whose hart is truly subiect to God? All the world cannot moue him to any elation of mind, whom truth hath subiected vnto it, neither shal he be moued with the tongues of al his praisers, that hath setled his whole hope in God. For they also that speak, behold, are nothing: they shall passe away with the sound of the wordes: but the truth of our Lord remaineth for euer.

What we ought to do, and say, in euery thing which we desire.

CHAP. XV.

SOnne, say thus in euery thing: Lord if it be pleasing vnto thee, let this be donne in

this ſort. Lord if it be to thy honour, let this be done in thy name Lord if thou ſeeſt it expedient for me, and alloweſt it to be profitable, then graunt vnto me, that I may vſe this vnto thine honour. But if thou knoweſt it wil be hurtful vnto me, & not profitable to the health of my ſoule, take from me al ſuch deſire. For euery deſire, procedeth not from the holy Ghoſt, though it ſeeme vnto man right & good. It is hard to iudg whether a good ſpirit, or the contrary, driue thee to deſire this or that: or whether alſo by thine own ſpirit thou be moued therunto. Many are deceaued in the end, who at the firſt ſeemed to be led by a good ſpirit.

2. Alwaies therefore, whatſoeuer occurreth vnto thy mind to be deſired, let it be deſired with

with the feare of God, and with humility of hart: and aboue al, thou oughteſt to commit it vnto me with full reſignation of thy ſelfe: and thou oughteſt to ſay. Lord thou knoweſt what is beſt, do this, or that, as thou pleaſeſt. Giue what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Do with me as thou knoweſt, and as beſt pleaſeth thee, and is moſt for thy honour. Set me where thou wilt, and deale with me in al things according to thy will. I am in thy hand, turne me, and turne me againe which way ſoeuer thou pleaſe. Behold I am thy ſeruant, ready to obey thee in all things: for I deſire not to liue vnto my ſelfe, but vnto thee: and would to God it might be in ſome worthy and perfect manner.

A prayer for the fulfilling of the will of God.

3. Graunt me thy grace sweet Iesus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and perseuere with me vntill the end. Graunt me alwaies to desire and will, that which is most acceptable vnto thee, and best pleaseth thee. Let thy will be mine, and let my will euer follow thine, and agree perfectly with it. Let my will and nill be all one with thine: and not to be able to will, or refuse any thing els, but what thou wilt, or reiectest.

4 Graunt that I may die to all things that are in the world, and to loue for thy sake to be conténed, and not to be knowne in this world. Graunt that aboue al things that can be desired, I may

rest in thee, and make my hart to enioy peace in thee. Thou art the true peace of the hart, thou art the only rest: out of thee all thinges are troublesome & vnquiet. In peace in the selfe same: that is, in thee, our chiefest eternal good, I will sleep and rest. Amen.

That true comfort is to be sought in God alone.

CHAP. XVI.

VVhatsoeuer I can desire, or imagine for my comfort, I looke not for it in this life, but hereafter. For if I should alone haue all the comfortes of the world, and might enioy all the delights therof, it is certaine that they could not longe endure. Wherfore my soule, thou canst

not be fully comforted, nor haue perfect delight, but in God, the comforter of the poore, and the receauer of the humble. Expect a while my ſoule, expect the diuine promiſe, and thou ſhalt haue aboundance of all good thinges in heauen. If thou deſire inordinatly the things that are preſent, thou ſhalt looſe the celeſtiall and eternall. Haue temporall thinges in vſe, and the eternall in deſire. Thou canſt not be filed with any temporall goods, becauſe thou art not created to enioy them.

2. Although thou enioyeſt all that is created: yet canſt thou not be happy therby nor bleſſed, but in God that hath created all things, thy whole beatitude and happines conſiſteth: not ſuch as is ſeene, and commended by the

foolish louers of the world, but such as the good faithful seruants of Christ expect, and the spirituall, and cleane of hart, whose conuersation is in heauen, sometimes take a tast of. Vaine and short is all human comfort. Blessed and true is the comfort which is receaued inwardly from truth. A deuout man euery where carrieth with him Iesus his comforter, and sayth vnto him: Be present with me, Lord Iesus, in euery place, and time. Let this be my comfort to be alwaies willing to want all humane comfort. And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will and iust proofe be vnto me as the greatest comfort: for thou wilt not be angry alwaies, nether wilt thou threaten for euer.

That all our care is to be placed in God.

CHAPT. XVII.

SOnne, ſuffer me to do with thee what I pleaſe. I know what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkeſt as man; thou iudgeſt in many things as humane affection perſwadeth thee. Lord, what thou ſaieſt is true. Thy ſolicitude for me is greater, then all the care that I can take for my ſelfe. For he ſtandeth at too great a hazard, that caſteth not his whole care vpon thee. Lord, ſo that my will may remaine right & firme in thee, do with me whatſoeuer it ſhall pleaſe thee. For it cannot be but good, whatſoeuer thou doeſt with me.

2. If it be thy will I ſhould

be in darknes, be thou bleſſed and if it be thy will I should be in light, be thou againe bleſſed. If thou vouchſafeſt to comfort me, be thou bleſſed: and if thou wilt afflict me, be thou alſo euer bleſſed. Sonne ſo thou oughted to be as ready to ſuffer, as to receaue ioy. Thou oughteſt to be as willing to be poore and needy, as plentifull and rich.

3. Lord, I will willingly ſuffer for thee, whatſoeuer thy pleſaure is shal befall me. I will receaue indifferently from thy hand, good and euill: ſweet, and ſower, delightful and ſorrowfull: and giue thee thanks for all that hapeneth vnto me. Keep me from all ſinne, and I wil neither feare death, nor hell: ſo as thou doſt not for euer caſt me from thee, and blot me out of

the booke of life, what tribulation ſoeuer befall me, ſhall not hurt me.

That temporall miſeries, by the exemple of Chriſt, are to be borne patiently.

CHAP. XVIII.

SOnne, I deſcended from Heauen for thy health: I tooke vpon me thy miſeries, my charity and not any neceſſity drawing me therunto, that thou mighteſt learne patience, & not refuſe to beare tẽporail miſeries. For from the houre of my birth, vntill my death on the Croſſe I was not without ſuffering of griefe. I ſuffered great want of temporall thinges: I often heard many complaints againſt me: I bare patiẽtly shame & reproches:

for benefits receaued ingratitud, for miracles, blaſphemies; for heauenly doctrine, reprehenſions.

2. Lord, for that thou wert patient in thy life time, chiefly in fulfilling the commandment of thy Father, it is reaſon that I miſerable ſinner ſhould haue patience in all thinges accordinge to thy will, and for myne owne health, beare the burthen of this corruptible life, as long as thou wilt. For although this preſent life be burdenſome, yet notwithſtandinge it is now by thy grace, made very meritorious: and by the example & the foot-ſteps of thy Saints, more plaine and tolerable to the weak. Yea, much more comfortable alſo, then it was in times paſt in the old law, when the gate of heauen remained ſhut: and the way alſo

to heauen ſeemed darker, when ſo few tooke care to ſeeke after thy Kingdome. Neither they alſo that then were iuſt, & were ordained to be ſaued, could enter into the heauenly glory before thy paſſion, and the debt of thy ſacred death was diſcharged.

3. O how great thanks am I bound to giue thee, that thou haſt vouchſafed to shew vnto me, and to all faithful ſoules a direct, and ſure way to thy euerlaſting Kingdome! For thy life is our way, and by holy patience we goe vnto thee that art our Crowne. If thou hadſt not gone before vs and taught vs, who would haue taken care to followe? Alas how many would ſtay behind, and remaine far off, if they beheld not thy excellent

examples! Behold we are yet colde although we haue heard of so many of thy wonders, and thy heauenly documents, what would become of vs, if we had not so greate light to follow thee?

Of suffering of iniuries: and who is proued to be truly patient.

CHAP. XIX.

VVhat is it thou sayst, Sonne? Cease to cōplaine, considering my passion, and that of my other Saints. Thou hast not yet made resistance to the shedding of bloud. It is but little thou sufferest, in comparison of them that haue suffered so much, so strongly tempted, so grieuously afflicted, so many waies tried and

exerciſed. Thou oughteſt therfore to call to minde the heauy ſufferinges of others, that thou maiſt the eaſier beare the little aduerſities which thou ſuffereſt. And if they ſeeme not little, beware leaſt thy impatience be cauſe therof. Yet whether they be little, or great, endeauour to beare all patiently.

2. How much the better thou diſpoſeſt thy ſelfe to ſuffering, ſo much the more wiſely thou doſt, & ſo much the more doeſt thou merit: thou ſhalt more eaſily alſo endure it, if thy mind be prepared, and thy ſelfe accuſtomed therunto. Do not ſay, I cannot ſuffer theſe things of ſuch a one, at the hands of ſuch a perſon, nor ſuch thinges are not to be ſuffered by me, for he hath done me great wronge and vpbraided me

with thoſe thinges which I neuer thought of: but of another I will willingly ſuffer, and as I ſhall ſee cauſe. Such a thought is foolish, it conſidereth not the vertue of patience, nor by whom it ſhall be crowned, but rather waigheth the perſons, and the iniuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that will not ſuffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whom he liſteth. But he that is indeede patient, mindeth not by whom he is exerciſed, whether by his Superiour, or ſome of his equals, or by his inferiours: whether by a good and holy man, or by a peruerſe and vnworthy perſon. But indifferently from all creatures, how much ſoeuer, or how often ſoeuer any aduerſity happeneth vnto him, he taketh

all thainkfully as frō the hands of God,& esteemeth it a great gaine: for that nothing before God, how little soeuer, so it be suffered for God, can be without merit.

4. Be thou therfore alwaies prepared for the fight, if thou wilt haue the victory. Without combat thou canst not attaine vnto the Crowne of patience. If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be cowned. But if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently. Without labour, there is no comming to rest: nor without fight, can the victory be obtained. Lord lett that be made possible to me by thy grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature. Thou knowest that I can suffer little, and that I am quickly dismayed. when a small aduersity ariseth

Let all exercise of tribulation be made pleasing vnto me, and be wellcome for thy name: for to suffer, and to be troubled for thee, is very profitable for my soule.

Of the acknowledging of our owne infirmity: and of the miseries of this life.

CHAPT. XX.

I will confesse against me my iniustice: I will confesse vnto thee o Lord my infirmity. Oftentimes it is a small matter that discomforteth, & grieueth me. I purpose to resist with courage, but when a small temptation commeth, it bringeth me into very narrow straits. It is somtimes a very trifle, from whence great

temptations doe proceed. And whileſt I thinke my ſelfe ſomwhat ſafe, when I leaſt evpect it, I find my ſelfe ſomtimes ouercome with a ſmall blaſt.

2. Behold therfore Lord, my humility & my frailty, euery way knowne vnto thee. Haue mercy on me and deliuer me out of the mire of my infirmities, that I ſticke not faſt therin: let me not for euer remaine deiected. This is that which oftentimes beareth me backe, & confoundeth me in thy ſight, for that I am ſo ſubiect to fall, & weake in reſiſting of my paſſions. And though I do not altogether conſent, yet their continuall aſſaults are troubleſome, and grieuous vnto me: and it is tedious, and a very irkſome thing to liue thus daily in ſtrife. Hereby my infirmity

mity is made knowne vnto me: for that wicked fancies doe alwaies much more easily enter in vpon me, then they can be cast out againe.

3. O mighty God of Israel, the zealous louer of faithfull soules; let it please thee to consider the labour & sorrow of thy seruant, and assist him in all whatsoeuer he vndertaketh. Strengthen me with heauenly force, least my old man; my miserable flesh, not fullie as yet subiect to the spirit, preuaile and get the vpper hand: against which I ought to fight, as long as I breath in this miserable life. Alas, what a kinde of life is this, where tribulations and miseries are neuer wanting! where all is set with enemies! Allis compassed with enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation

goeth away, another commeth, yea and during the firſt conflict alſo, many others come vnlooked for one after another.

4. And how can a life be loued, that hath ſo many afflictions, and is ſubiect to ſo many calamities and miſeries? How is it called a life, that begetteth ſo many deaths, and plagues? And yet it is loued, & many ſeek to delight themſelues therin. The world is oftentimes blamed, that it is deceiptfull and vaine, and yet it is not eaſily forſaken, becauſe the inclinations of our flesh do too much ouer-rule vs. Some things draw vs to loue it, others to contemne it. To the loue of the world do draw vs the concupiſcence of the flesh, the concupiſcence of the eyes, and the pride of life: but the paines and miſeries that

do iustly follow them, causeth a hatred and loathsomnes therof.

5. But alas wicked pleasure ouercommeth the mind, which is giuen ouer to the world, an she esteemeth it a delight to be vnder thorns, because she hath neither seene nor tasted the sweetnes of God, and the inward delight of vertue. But they that perfectly contemne the world, and endeauour to liue to God vnder holy discipline, these are not ignorant of the diuine sweetnes, promised to the true forsakers of the world, and do more clearlie see how grieuously the world erreth, and how it is many waies deceaued.

That we are to reſt in God aboue all his gifts.

CHAP. XXI.

ABoue all thinges, and in all things my ſoule, thou ſhalt euer reſt in God, for he is the euerlaſting reſt of the Saints. Grãt me moſt ſweete and louing Ieſu, to reſt in thee aboue all creatures, aboue all health and beauty, aboue all glory and honour, aboue all power and dignity, aboue all knowledge & learning, aboue all riches and arts, aboue all ioy & gladnes, aboue al fame and praiſe, aboue all ſweetnes and comfort, aboue all hope and promiſe, aboue all merit and deſire, aboue all gifts and preſents that thou canſt giue and impart

vnto vs, aboue all ioy and iubily that the mind of man can receaue and feele. laſtly, aboue Angels & Archangels, & aboue all the heauenly Hoſts, aboue all viſible and inuiſible thinges, and aboue all that, that thou art not, my God.

2. For that thou, my Lord God, ſurpaſſeſt all, thou alone moſt high, thou alone moſt powerfull, thou alone moſt full and ſufficient, thou alone moſt ſweet, & comfortable, thou alone moſt beautifull, & louing, thou alone moſt noble and glorious aboue al things: in whom al good thinges together, both are perfectly, and euer haue beene and shalbe: and therfore it is too little and not ſufficient, whatſoeuer thou beſtoweſt on me beſids thy ſelf, or reuealeſt vnto me of thy ſelf, or promiſeſt, whileſt thou art not

ſeene, and not fully obtained: for ſurely my hart cannot reſt, nor be fully contented vnleſſe it reſt in thee, and ſurmount all giftes and creatures whatſoeuer.

3. O my moſt beloued ſpouſe Chriſt Ieſus, the moſt chaſt louer, the gouuernour of all creatures, who will giue me winges of true liberty to fly, & reſt in thee! O when shall it be fully granted me, to conſider in quietnes of mind, & ſee how ſweet thou art my Lord God! When shall I fully recollect my ſelf in thee, that for thy loue I may not feele my ſelf, but thee alone, aboue all ſenſe, and feelinge, in a manner not knowne vnto all. But now I oftentimes lament, & heare my infelicity with griefe. For that manie euils occur in this vaile of miſeries, which do often trouble,

greeue, & darken me, often hinder and distract me, allure and intangle me, to the end I should not haue free accesse vnto thee, and that I should not enioy those sweet and heauenly imbracings which thou alwaies giuest to the blessed & celestiall spirits. Let my sighes and manifold desolation on earth moue thee.

4. O Iesus, splendor of eternall glory, and comfort of the pilgrime soule, with thee is my tongue without voice, and my silence speaketh vnto thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come! Let him come vnto me his poore seruant, & make me glad. Let him put out his hand, and deliuer me miserable wretch, from all anguish. Come, come blessed Lord, for without thee I shall haue no ioyfull day, nor

houre. Thou art my ioy, & without thee, there is nothinge but want. A wretched creature, I am and in a manner impriſoned, and loaden with irons, vntill thou comforteſt me with the light of thy preſence, and giueſt me liberty, and sheweſt a fauourable countenance vnto me.

5. Let others ſeeke what they pleaſe inſteede of thee, but for me, nothing els doth, nor shall delight me, but thou only my God, my hope, my euerlaſtinge health. I will not hold my peace nor ceaſe to pray, vntill thy grace returne againe, and thou ſpeake inwardly vnto me. Behold I am here, behold I come vnto thee, becauſe thou haſt called vpon me. Thy teares, and the deſire of thy ſoule, thy humility, & the contrition of thy hart, haue

inclined, and brought me vnto thee. And I ſaid: Lord I haue called thee, and haue deſired to enioy thee, being ready to forſake all things for thee. For thou firſt haſt ſtirred me vp that I might ſeeke thee. Bleſſed be thou therfor, o Lord, that haſt shewed this goodnes to thy ſeruant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6. What hath thy ſeruant more to ſay before thee, but that he doe greatly humble himſelfe in thy ſight, alwaies mindfull of his owne iniquity, and baſenes? For there is none like vnto thee in all whatſoeuer is wonderfull, in heauen and earth. Thy words are good, thy iudgments true, and by thy prouidence al things are gouerned. Praiſe therfore & glory be vnto thee. O wiſdome of the eternall Father: let my

tongue, my ſoule, & al creatures, together, praiſe and bleſſe thee.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

CHAP. XXII.

OPen, O Lord, my hart in thy Law, and teach me to walke in thy Commandements. Graunt me to vnderſtand thy will, and to remember thy benefits, as well in generall, as in particuler, with great reuerence and diligent conſideration: that hence-forward I may be able worthily to giue thee thanks. But I know, and confeſſe, that I am not able to giue thee due thanks, for the fauours which thou beſtoweſt vpon me, euen in the leaſt moment. I am leſſe

then the least of thy benefits: & when I consider the excellency of thy Maiesty, the greatnes therof maketh my spirit to faint.

2. Al that we haue in our soule & body, & whatsoeuer we possesse outwardly or inwardly, naturaly or spiritually, are thy benefits, & do praise thee as bountiful, pious, and good, from whom we haue receaued al that is good. Although one haue receaued more, another lesse, al not withstanding are thine, and without thee euen the least cannot be had. He that hath receaued greater, cannot glory of his owne desert, nor extol himselfe aboue others nor insult ouer the lesser, for he is greater & better that ascribeth least vnto himselfe, and is more humble and deuout in rendring thanks. And he that esteemeth

himſelfe baſeſt of all men, and iudgeth him ſelfe moſt vnworthy, is fitteſt to receaue greater bleſſings.

3. And he that hath receaued fewer, ought not to be ſory, nor beare it impatiently, nor enuy them that are enriched with greater ſtore, but attend rather vnto thee, & chiefly praiſe thy goodnes, for that thou beſtoweſt thy gifts ſo bountifully, ſo freely, and ſo willingly, without reſpect of perſons. Al things proceed from thee, and therfore in all thinges thou art to be praiſed. Thou knoweſt what is fit to be giuen to euery one, and why this man hath leſſe, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine, who doſt waigh in iuſt meaſure the deſerts of euery one.

4. Wherfore my Lord God, I

esteeme it as a great benefit, not to haue much, wherby outwardlie & before men I might seeme worthy of praise and glory: so that he, who considereth his owne pouerty & basenes, ought not therfore to conceaue griefe, or sorrow, or to be therfore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad for that thou, O God, hast chosen the poore and humble, and the despised of this world for thy selfe, and for thy familiar and domesticall friends. Witnesses are thy Apostles themselues, whom thou hast appointed princes ouer al the earth. And yet they liued without cõplaint in the world, so humble & simple, meane to the eyes of men, without all malice & deceipt, that they reioyced to receaue cõtumelies for thy name, &

what the world abhorreth, they imbraced with great affection.

5. Nothing therfore ought so to reioyce him that loueth thee, & acknowledgeth thy benefits. as the accõplishment of thy will in himselfe, and the pleasure of thy eternall appointment wherwith he ought to be so contented and conforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: & as peaceable & cõtent in the last, as in the first place: & as willingly to be despised & contemned, & to be of no esteeme or accompt, as to be preferred in honour before all others, and to be greater in the world. For thy will & the loue of thy glory, ought to be preferred before all things: & to comfort him more, & please him better, then all the benefits which

he hath receaued or can desire.

Of foure thinges that bring much peace.

CHAP. XXIII.

SOnne, now I will teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty. Do Lord, I beseech thee, as thou saist, for I shall be very glad to heare it. Endeauour my Sonne to do rather the will of another, then thine owne. Euer choose rather to haue lesse, then more. Alwaies seeke the lowest place, & to be inferiour to euery one. Wish alwaies, & pray, that the will of God may be wholy fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man entreth into the limits of peace and most quiet rest.

2. Lord, this thy short speach

containeth much perfection. It is little in words, but ful in ſenſe, and aboundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept by me, then should I not ſo eaſily be troubled. For as often as I feele my ſelfe vnquiet, and afflicted, I find that I haue ſtraied from this doctrine. But thou that canſt all things, & euer loueſt the good & profit of my ſoule, increaſe in me thy grace, that I may fulfill thy words and perfect mine owne health.

A Prayer againſt euil thoughts.

3. My Lord God, be not far from me: my God haue regard to help me, for ſundry thoughts haue riſen vp againſt me, and great feares afflicting my ſoule. How ſhall I paſſe through them without hurt? How ſhal I breake them?

them? I, saith he, will go before thee, and will humble the glorious of the earth. I will open the dores of the prison, and reueale vnto thee hidden secrets. Do Lord as thou saiest, and lett all euil thoughts fly from befote thy face. This is my hope, and my only comfort to fly vnto thee in all tribulation, to trust in thee, to call vpon thee from my hart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

A Prayer for enlightening of the minde.

4. Enligthen me, G good Iesu, with the clearnes of inward light, and expell all darknes of my hart. Represse the many wauering thoughts, & beate down the fury of the temptations which violently assault me Fight

ſtrongly for me, and vanquish the euill beaſts, that is, the alluring concupiſcences, that peace may be made in thy vertue, and abundance of thy praiſe ſound in thy holy court, which is a pure conſcience. Command the winds and tempeſts: ſay vnto the ſea, Be ſtill: and to the north wind, Blow not, and a great calme shal enſue.

5, Send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may shine vpon the earth, for I am empty and vnprofitable earth, vntill thou imparteſt thy light vnto me. Powre out thy grace from aboue, wash my hart with heauenly dew, giue waters of deuotion, to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift vp my mind, ouercharged with the waight

of sinne; draw vp my whole desire to heauenly treasures, that heauing tasted the sweetnes of celestiall happines, it may loath to thinke of earthly vanityes.

6. Take me violently to thee, and deliuer me from al vnstable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet & satisfy my desire. Ioyne me vnto thee with an vnspeakable band of loue: for thou only fillest the mind of him that loues thee, & without thee all things are distastfull,

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Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others.

CHAP. XXIII.

SOnne, be not curious, trouble not thy selfe with idle

cares. What is this or that to thee, whether that man be such or no, or whether this man do, or speake this or that? Thou shalt not need to answere for others, but shalt giue accompt of thy selfe, Why therfore doest thou trouble thy selfe! Behold I know euery one what he is, and doe see all thinges that are vnder the sunne, and doe vnderstand how it is with euery one, what he thinketh, what he would, and at what his intention aymeth. Al things therfore are to be committed vnto me: but doe thou keepe thy selfe in good peace, & suffer the vnquiet to do as they wil. What soeuer they shall haue done, or sayd, shal fall vpon thēselues, for they cannot deceaue me.

2. Desire not too great fame

in this world, nor to be knowne to many, nor to haue the priuate loue of men: for these thinges breede distractions, and cause great darknes of hart. I would willingly vtter my wordes, and reueale my secrets vnto thee, if thou dideſt diligently obserue my comming, and dideſt open the dore of thy hart vnto me. Be carefull and watch in prayer, and humble thy selfe in all things.

Wherin the firme peace of the hart and true profit doth consist.

CHAP. XXV.

SOnne, I haue sayd: Peace I leaue to you, my peace I giue, to you: not as the world giueth, doe I giue to you: All do desire

peace, but all care not for thoſe thinges that appertaine vnto true peace My peace is with the humble, and meeke of hart. Thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou wilt heare me and follow my voice, thou maiſt enioy much peace. What then shall I doe? In euery thing attend vnto thy ſelfe what thou doeſt, and what thou ſayeſt: and direct thy whole intention vnto this, that thou maieſt pleaſe me alone, and deſire or ſeeke nothing out of me. Of the ſayings & doings of others, iudge nothing rashly: neither doe thou intangle thy ſelfe with things not committed vnto thee: and doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or ſeldome troubled.

2. But neuer to feele any trouble at all, nor to ſuffer any griefe

of hart or body, is not the ſtate of this life, but of euerlaſtinge reſt. Thinke not therfore, that thou haſt found true peace, if thou feeleſt no ſorrow, nor that then all is well, if thou haue no aduerſary: nor that it is perfection, that all thinges be done according to thy deſire. Nether do thou then eſteeme highly of thy ſelf, or imagine thy ſelfe to be eſpecially beloued, if thou be in great deuotion, and ſweetnes, for in theſe things a true louer of vertue is not tried: nether doth the profit and perfection of man, conſiſt in hauing them.

3. Wherin then Lord? In offering thy ſelfe from the very bottome of thy hart, vnto the diuine ſeruice, not ſeeking thine owne intereſt, or commodity, nether in great nor litle things, nether

in time nor eternity: ſo that with equall countenance, thou maiſt perſiſt in thanksgiuing, both in proſperity & in aduerſity, waighing all things with an equal ballance. If thou be of ſuch courage and ſo patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawne from thee, thou prepare thy hart to ſuffer greater matters, & not iuſtify thy ſelfe, as though thou oughteſt not to ſuffer theſe, and ſo great afflictions, but iuſtify me in whatſoeuer I appoint, and praiſe my holy name; then thou walkeſt in the true and right way of peace: & thou ſhalt haue vndoubted hope to ſee my face againe with great ioy. And if thou attaine to the full contempt of thy ſelfe, then ſhalt thou enioy as great aboundance of peace, as thy banishment may permit.

Of the excellency of a free mind, which humble prayer better deserueth then reading.

CHAPT. XXVI.

LOrd, it is the work of a perfect man, neuer to slack his mind from the attentiue thought of heauenly things, & as it were to passe without care, through many cares: not faintingly, but with a certaine priuiledge of a free mind, adheringe by inordinate affection to no creature.

2. I beseech thee most mercifull God, preserue me from the cares of this life: least I should be too much intangled therby: and from the many necessities of the body, least I should be enthralled by pleasure: from al hin-

drances of the ſoule, leaſt broken with troubles I should be deiected and diſmayed. I meane not from thoſe things that worldly vanity ſo greatly deſireth, but from thoſe miſeries, that as punishments, do weigh downe & hinder the ſoule of thy ſeruant, with the generall curſe of mortality, that it cannot enter into liberty of ſpirit, as often as it would.

5. O my God the vnſpeakable ſweetnes, make bitter vnto me all carnall comfort, which may draw me away from the loue of euerlaſtinge hapines, and wickedly allure me to it ſelfe, with the force of certaine preſent delights. Let not flesh and bloud ouercome me, O Lord Let not the world, and the short glory therof deceaue me. Let not the

Diuell and his ſubtile fraud, ſupplant me. Giue me force to reſiſt, patience to ſuffer, and conſtancy to perſeuere. Giue me inſteed of al cõforts of the world, the moſt ſweet vnnion of thy ſpirit, and in lieu of carnall loue, powre into my ſoule the loue of thy name.

4. Behold, meate, drinke, cloathes, and other neceſſaires for the maintenance of the body, are burdenſome vnto a feruent ſpirit. Graunt me to affect ſuch nourishments in due meaſure, & not to be intangled with an ouer great deſire of them. It is not lawfull to renounce them wholy, for that nature is to be mantained: but to deſire ſuperfluityes, and thoſe thinges that do rather delight, then ſuſtayne, the law of God forbideth, for

otherwiſe the flesh would rebell againſt the ſpirit. Herein I beſeech thee, let thy hand gouerne me, and teach me, that I may not exceed.

That priuate loue moſt hindreth from the chiefeſt good.

CHAP. XXVII.

SOnne, thou oughteſt to giue all for all, and to retaine nothing of thy ſelfe. Know that the loue of thy ſelfe, doth hurt thee more, then any thinge in the world. According to the loue, & affection thou beareſt them, ſe doth euery thinge cleaue vnto thee more or leſſe. If thy loue be pure, ſimple, and well ordered, thou ſhalt be free from bondage. Couet not that which thou maieſt not haue. Be not willinge to

haue that, which may hinder thee and depriue thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderfull thinge that thou committeſt not thy ſelfe wholy vnto me, from the bottome of thy hart, with al things, that thou canſt deſire, or haue.

2. Why doſt thou conſume thy ſelf with a vaine grief? Why tyreſt thou thy mind with needleſſe cares? Reſigne thy ſelfe to me, and thou shalt feele no loſſe at all. If thou ſeekeſt this or that, and wouldeſt be here or there, to enioy thine owne commoditie and pleaſure, thou shalt neuer be in quiet, nor free from trouble of minde: for in euerie thing, ſomwhat wil be wanting, and in euery place there will be ſome that will croſſe thee.

3. Not euery externall thing therfore attained, and heaped to-

gether, helpeth thee, but it rather auaileth, if thou despise it, and doest roote it out from thy hart, which thou must not vnderstand only of thy reuenues & wealth, but of the desire of honour also, and vaine praise; all which doe passe away with this fadinge world. The place auaileth little, if the spirit of feruour be wantinge: neither shall that peace which is sought abroad long continue, if the state of thy hart be destitute of a true foundation: that is, vnlesse thou persist in me, thou maist change, but not better thy selfe. For when occasion doth happen, thou shalt finde that which thou soughtest to fly, and perhaps more.

A prayer for cleansing the hart, and obtaining of heauenlie wisedome.

4. Confirme me O Lord with

the grace of thy holy ſpirit. Giue me force to ſtrengthen my inward man, and to purge my hart from all vnprofitable care, and griefe; not to be drawne away with ſundry deſires of any thing, either little or great but, to conſider all thinges, how they are tranſitory, and do quicklie fade, and that I my ſelfe doe alſo paſſe away together with them. for no thinge is permanent vnder the ſunne, where all thinges are vanity, and affliction of minde. O how wiſe is he that ſo conſidereth them!

5. Graunt me O Lord heauenly wiſdome, that I may learne aboue all thinges to ſeeke and finde thee, aboue all thinges to delight in thee, & to loue thee, and to thinke of all created thinges as they are, according to the

diſpoſition of thy wiſedome, Graunt me prudently to auoyde him that flatters me, and to ſuffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wiſedome not to be moued with euery blaſt of wordes: nor to giue eare to dangerous flattery: for ſo we ſhall go on ſecurely in the way which we haue begun.

Againſt the tongue of Slanderers.

CHAPT. XXVIII.

SOnne, be not grieued if ſome thinke euill of thee, and ſpeak that which thou doſt not willingly heare. Thou oughteſt to iudge the worſt of thy ſelfe, and to thinke no man weaker then thy ſelfe. If thou walk according to the ſpirit, thou wilt

wilt not much esteeme of flying wordes. It is noe small wisdome, to be silent in time of euill, and inwardly to turne to me, and not to be troubled with the iudgement of men.

2 Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men. For whether they iudge well or euill, thou art neuertheless alwaies the same. Where is true peace, and true glory? Is it not in me? And he that coueteth not to please men; nor feareth to displease thē, shall enioy much peace. From inordinate loue and vaine feare, ariseth all disquiet of hart, and distraction of the senses.

How we ought to call vpon God, and blesse him when tribulation draweth neere.

CHAP. XXIX.

BLessed (O Lord) be thy name for euer, since it pleaseth thee, that this temptation and tribulation should fall vpon me I cannot fly it, but haue need to fly to thee, that thou maist helpe me, and turne it to my good. Lord I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me, I am much troubled with this present grief. And now, beloued Father, what shall I say? I am taken in narrow straites, saue me in this houre. Yea therfore I am fallen in this houre, that thou maist be glorified, when I shall be greatly

humbled, and by thee deliuered. Let it pleaſe thee, Lord, to deliuer me: for poore wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither ſhall I go without thee? Graunt patience Lord, euen this tyme alſo. Helpe me my God, and then I wil not feare how much ſoeuer I be oppreſſed.

2. And now in this, what ſhal I ſay; Lord, thy will be done, I haue well deſerued to be afflicted and grieued. Surely I ought to beare it: and I would to God I might beare it with patience, vntil the tempeſt be paſſed ouer, and it become calme. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this temptation from me, and to aſſwage the violence therof, that I vtterly ſinke not vnder it, as oftentimes heretofore thou haſt done vnto me (my Mercy!) And

how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easie is this change of thy migthy hand to thee.

Of crauinge the diuine aide, and confidence of recouering grace.

CHAP. XXX.

SOnne, I am thy Lord, who doe vse to giue comfort in the day of tribulation. Come vnto me when it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hindreth heauenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thy self vnto prayer. For before thou dost earnestly commend thy selfe to me, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy selfe in outward things. And hence it proceedeth that

doth little profit thee, vntill thou consider that I am he, that deliuer those that trust in me: & that out of me there is nether powerfull helpe, nor profitable counsell, nor remedy that can continue. But now thou hauing recouered breath after the tẽpest, gather strẽgth againe in the light of my mercies: for I am at hãd saith our Lord, to repare all, not only entirely, but also aboundantly.

2. Is there any thinge hard to me? or am I like vnto him that promiseth and performeth not? Where is thy faith? Be firme and constant. Take courage & be patient, comfort will be giuen thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I will come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexeth thee, & a vaine feare that affrighteth thee. What els doth the care for future

incertainties bring thee, but ſorrow vpon ſorrow? Sufficient for the day is the euill therof. It is a vaine & vnprofitable thing to be grieued, or to reioyce for future, thinges, that perhaps will neuer happen.

3. But it is incident to man to be deluded with ſuch imaginations: and a ſigne of little courage to be ſo eaſily drawn away by the ſuggeſtion of the enemy. For he careth not ſo he delude, and deceaue thee, whether it be true or falſe which he propoſeth: whether he ouerthrowe thee with the loue of preſent, or the feare of future thinges. Let not therefore thy hart be troubled, nether doe thou feare. Beleeue in me, and put thy truſte in my mercy. When thou thinkeſt thy ſelfe furdeſt off from me, often-

times I am neereſt vnto thee. When thou iudgeſt that almoſt all is loſt, then oftentimes greateſt gaine of merit is at hand. All is not loſt, when any thing falleth out contrary vnto thee. Thou muſt not iudge according to that which thou feeleſt for the preſent: nor giue thy ſelfe ouer to any griefe, from whence ſoeuer it commeth, as though all hope of deliuery were quite gone.

4. Thinke not thy ſelfe wholy left, although for a time I haue ſent thee ſome tribulation, or withdrawn thy deſired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingedome of heauen. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the reſt of my ſeruants, that yee be exerciſed with many aduerſities, then that yee should haue all thinges accordinge to

your desires. I know the secret thoughts of thy hart, and that it is very expedient for thy soules health, that thou be left sometimes without tast and feeling of spirituall sweetnes, least perhaps thou shouldest be puffed vp with good successe, & shouldest please thy selfe in that, which thou art not. That which I haue giuen, I can take away, and restore it againe when I please.

5. When I giue it, it is mine: when I whitdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine: for mine is euery good, and euery perfect gift. If I send thee affliction, or any crosse whatsoeuer, repine not nor be not dismayed, I can quickly lift thee vp againe, and turne all thy sorrow into ioye. Neuertheless I am iust, & greatlie to be praised, when I doe all

this vnto thee.

9. If thou be wise, and consider well thy case, thou wilt neuer yielde so cowardly to griefe, for any aduersity that befalles thee, but rather reioyce and giue thanks: yea to accompt this thy only ioy, that afflicting thee with sorrowes, I doe not spare thee. As my Father hath loued me, I also loue you, said I vnto my beloued Disciples, whom certainlie I sent not to temporall ioyes, but to great conflicts · not to honours, but contempts: not to idlenes, but to labours: not to rest, but to bringe much fruit in patience. My Sonne remember these words.

Of the contempt of all creatures, to find our Creatour.

CHAP. XXXI.

LOrd, I ſtand yet in neede of great grace, if I muſt goe ſo far as that no man or creature can hinder me. For as longe as any thing holdeth me, I cannot fly freely vnto thee. He deſired to fly with great liberty that ſaid, Who will giue me winges like a doue, and I will fly and reſt? What thinge more quiet then a ſimple ey? And what more free, then he that deſireth nothing vpon earth? Man ought therfore to aſcend aboue al creatures, and perfectly to forſake himſelfe, and to remaine in exceſſe of mind: & conſider that thou, who art the

maker of all things, haſt nothing amongſt creaturs like vnto thee. And vnleſſe a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedome of minde attend vnto diuine thinges. And for this cauſe there are ſo fewe contemplatiue men to be found, for that few can wholy ſequeſter themſelues from fadinge creatures.

2. Much grace is neceſſary to lift vp a ſoule, and to carry it aboue it ſelfe. And vnleſſe a man be lifted vp in ſpirit, and deliuered from al creatures, and wholy vnited vnto God, whatſoeuer he knoweth, and whatſoeuer he hath, is of little accompt. Long ſhall he be little, and lie in earthlie baſenes, that eſteemeth any thinge great, but the one only vn meaſurable and eternall good.

For whatſoeuer is not God is nothing, & ought to be accounted as nothing. There is great difference betweene the wiſdome of a ſpirituall and deuout perſon, and the knowledge of a learned and ſtudious Clarke. Far more noble is that learninge, which floweth from aboue, from the diuine influence, then that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

3. There are many that deſire contemplation, but they endeauour not to exerciſe thoſe things that are required therunto. It is a great hinderance, that we reſt in ſignes and ſenſible things, and haue little true mortification. I know not what it is, nor by what ſpirit we are lead, nor what we pretend, we that ſeeme to be called ſpirituall, that we take ſo

much paines, and ſo great care for tranſitory & baſe things, and ſcarce or ſeldome thinke of our owne inward profit, with ful recollection of our ſenſes.

4. Alas, preſently after a ſleight recollection we break forth, and weigh not our wordes with diligent examination. We minde not where our affections ly, nor bewaile the impurity and many faults that are in all our actions. For all flesh had corrupted her way, & therfore did that generall floud enſue. Sith our inward affection then is much corrupted, it muſt needes be that our action proceeding therof, be corrupted as a ſigne of the want of inward vigour. From a pure hart proceedeth the fruit of good life.

5. We aske how much one hath done: but how vertuous his

actions are, is not ſo diligently conſidered. We inquire whether he be ſtronge, rich, beautifull, handſome, a good writer, a good ſinger, or a good labourer: but how poore he is in ſpirit, how patient, and meeke, how deuout and ſpirituall, is ſeldome ſpoken of. Nature reſpecteth outward things, grace turneth herſelfe to the inward vertues. That is often deceaued: this hath her truſt in God, to the ende she be not deceaued.

Of deniall of our ſelues, and forſaking all our affections.

CHAPT. XXXII.

SOnne, thou canſt not poſſeſſe perfect liberty, vnleſſe thou wholy deny thy ſelfe. All ſuch

as be louers of themselues, are bound in fetters, they are couetous, curious, wanderes, seekers of ease, and not of those thinges that appertaine to Iesus Christ; but oftentimes deuisinge, and framing that which wil not continue. For all shall perish, that proceedeth not from God. Keep this short and complete word. Forsake all, & thou shalt find all. Leaue thy inordinate desires, and thou shalt finde rest. Consider this well, and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt vnderstand all.

2. Lord, this is not one daies worke, nor childrens sport; yea in this short sentence, al the perfection of Religious persons is included. Sonne, thou must not goe back, nor straight waies be dejected, when thou heares the

way of the perfect, but rather be ſtirred vp to more worthy and noble attempts, or at leaſt to conceaue an earneſt deſire therof. I would it were ſo wel with thee, and thou wert come ſo far, that thou wert no longer a louer of thy ſelfe, but didſt ſtand meerly at my beck, and at his whom I haue appointed a Father ouer thee, then thou ſhouldeſt exceedingly pleaſe me, and all thy life would paſſe away in ioy and peace. Thou haſt yet many thinges to forſake, which vnleſſe thou wholy reſigne ouer vnto me, thou ſhalt not attaine to that which thou deſireſt. I counſell thee to buy of me purified gold, that thou mayeſt become rich, that is, heauenly wiſdome, which treadeth vnder foot all baſe and earthly things. Set little by the

wiſdome

wisdome of this world, & esteeme not of the contentment of men, nor thine owne fancyes.

3. I said that thou shouldest buy the meane and base things, with the precious, & those that were of great esteeme with men. For true heauenly wisdome seemeth very base, and of small accompt, and is scarce thought of by men: for that esteemeth not highly of it selfe, nor seeketh to be magnified vpon earth: many indeed praise it from the teeth outward, but in their life they are far from it: yet is it the precious pearle which is hidden from many.

Of Inconſtancy of hart, and of directing our finall intentions vnto God.

CHAP. XXXIII.

SOnne, truſt not to affection: that which now is, wil quickly be changed into another. As long as thou liueſt, thou art ſubiect to mutability, euen againſt thy will: ſo that now thou art merry, now ſad, now quiet, now troubled, now deuout, now diſtracted, now diligent, now idle, now heauy, now light. But he that is wiſe, and well inſtructed in ſpirit, reamaineth alwaies one in the middeſt of theſe changes, not heeding what he feeleth in himſelfe, or which way the wind of mutability bloweth: but

that the whole intention of his mind, may tend as it ought, to the moſt perfect and beſt end. For ſo he may continue one, and the ſelfe ſame, without any change in the middſt of ſo many ſundry chaunces, directing alwaies the ſincere eie of his intention vnto me.

2. And how much purer the eye of the intention is, ſo much the more conſtantly doth he paſſe through the variety of many contrary waues. But in many things the eye of a ſincere intention waxeth blind, for it quickly looketh vpon ſome delight, ſome obiect that occurreth. And it is rare to find one that is wholy free from all blemish of ſeeking himſelfe. So the Iewes in times paſt came into Bethania to Martha and Mary, not for Ieſus a-

lone, but to see Lazarus also. The eye of the intention therfore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, & to be directed vnto me, neglecting the multitude & variety of earthly obiects.

That God is sweete aboue all things, and in all things, to him that loueth.

CHAP. XXXIV.

BEhold my God, and all things! What would I haue more, & what can I desire more happy? O sweet and comfortable worde! but to him that loueth the word, not the world, nor those things that are in the world. My God, and all things! Inough is said to him that vnderstandeth: and it is pleasant to

him that loueth, to repeat often. For when thou art preſent, all things do yield delight, but when thou art abſent, all becomes irkſome. Thou giueſt quiet of hart and much peace, and pleaſant ioy. Thou makeſt men thinke well of all, and praiſe thee in all things: nether can any thing pleaſe vs long without thee: but if it be pleaſant and delightſom, thy grace muſt be preſent, and it muſt be ſeaſoned with the ſweetnes of thy wiſdome.

2. What can be diſtaſtfull vnto him, to whom thou art pleaſing? And whom thou delighteſt not, what can be pleaſant to him? But the wiſe of this world, and that haue their contentment in ſenſuall things, cannot attaine to thy wiſdome, for in the world is much vanity, and in the flesh is

death. But they that follow thee by the contempt of wordly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proued to be truely wise: for they are changed from vanity to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet & what good soeuer is found in creatures, they wholy referre vnto the praise of their Maker. great, Notwithstanding, yea very great is the difference, between the sweetnes of the Creatour, & of the creature, of eternity & of time, of vncreated and created light.

3. O euerlasting light, surpassing all created lights, cast forth the beames of thy brightnesse from aboue, and pierce the most inward corners of my hart: purify, reioyce, clarify and quicken my spirit with all the powers

thereof, that I may cleaue vnto thee with exceſſe of vnſpeakable ioy. O whē wil that bleſſed and deſired houre come, that I may be filled with thy preſence, and thou maiſt be vnto me all in all things? as long as this is not graunted me, I shall not haue ful nor perfect ioy, Alas! my old man yet liuet h in me, he is not wholy crucified, he is not perfectly dead, he doth yet couet ſtrongly againſt the ſpirit, & moueth ciuile warrs, & fuffereth not the Kingdom of my ſoule to be in peace.

4. But thou that ruleſt the powers of the ſea, and aſſwageſt the motion of the waues, riſe and help me: diſſipate the people that deſire war, and deſtroy them in thy might, and let thy

hand be glorified: for there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

CHAP. XXXV.

SOnne, there is no security in this life: as long as thou liueſt thou shalt alwaies haue need of ſpirituall armour. Thou liueſt among enemies, and art aſſaulted on al ſides: if therfore thou defendeſt not thy ſelfe on euery ſide with the shield of patience, thou canſt not be long vnwounded. Moreouer if thou fixe not thy hart on me, with a ſincere will to ſuffer all things for me, thou canſt not ſuſtaine the heat of this

battaile, nor get that victorious crowne, which they haue that are in glory. Thou oughteſt therfore manfully to goe through all, and to vſe a ſtrong hand againſt whatſoeuer withſtandeth thee. For to him that ouercommeth is giuen Manna; and to the negligent is left much woe.

2. If thou ſeekeſt reſt in this world, how wilt thou then attaine to euerlaſting reſt? Giue not thy ſelfe to much eaſe, but to much patience. Seeke true peace, not in earth, but in heauen; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughteſt for the loue of God, willingly to vndergoe whatſoeuer labours, to endure whatſoeuer griefes, temptations, vexations, anxieties, neceſſities, infirmities, iniuries, detractions,

reprehenſions, humiliations, confuſions, corrections, and contempts: theſe helpe to the attaining of vertue: theſe try a Nouice of Chriſt, theſe make a heauenly crowne. I will giue an euerlaſting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confuſion

3. Thinkeſt thou, that thou shalt alwaies haue ſpititual conſolations at will? My Saints had not ſo, but many afflictions, and ſundry temptations, and many diſcomforts: all which they endured patiently, and truſted rather in God, then in themſelues: knowinge that the ſufferings of this time, are not condigne to the deſeruing of future glory. Wilt thou haue that ſtraight wayes, which many after teares, and great labours haue hardly obtey-

ned' Expect the comming of thy Lord, do manfully, be of good courage: feare not, do not flye, but offer both body & soule for the glory of God. I will reward thee in most plentifull manner, and I wil be with thee in all thy tribulations.

Against the vaine Iudgement of men.

CHAP. XXXVI.

SOnne, fixe thy hart stedfastly on God, feare not the iudgments of men, when thy conscience giueth testimony of thy iustice & innocency. It is a good and a happy thing to suffer in that sort: neither will it be burdensome to an humble minde, nor to him that trusteth rather

in God, then in himſelfe. The moſt part of men are giuen to talke much, & therfor little care is to be had of their words: neyther is it poſſible to ſatisfy all. Though the Apoſtle endeauoured to pleaſe all in our Lord, and made himſelfe all vnto al, yet he little regarded that he was iudged by men.

2. He did for the edification and health of others as much as he could, & lay in him: yet could he not hinder, but that he was ſomtimes iudged, and deſpiſed by others. Therfore he committed all to God, who knew all, & defended himſelfe with patience, & humility againſt euil tongues, & ſuch as thought vanities and lyes, and ſpake what they liſted: Yet ſomtimes notwithſtanding he anſwered, leaſt the

weake might haue receaued ſcandall by his ſilence.

3. Who art thou, that feareſt a mortall man? to day he is, and to morrow he is not ſeene. Feare God and the terror of men ſhall not trouble thee. What harme can the wordes or iniuries of any do thee! he rather hurteth himſelfe then thee: neyther can he auoyd the iudgments of God, be he what he will. Haue thou God before thine eies, & contend not with complaining wordes. And if for the preſent thou ſeemeſt to be troaden downe, and to ſuffer ſhame and confuſion without deſert, doe not repine, neither doe thou leſſen thy crowne by thy impatience, but rather lift vp thine eyes to me in heauen. I am able to deliuer thee from ſhame and wrong, and to

repay euery one according to their works.

Of a full and pure reſignation of our ſelues for the obtaining freedome of hart.

CHAP. XXXVII.

SOnne, leaue thy ſelfe, and thou ſhalt finde me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy ſelfe, and thou ſhal euer gaine. For greater grace ſhall alwaies be giuen thee. when thou doſt perfectly reſigne thy ſelfe, and not turne back to take thy ſelfe againe. Lord, how often ſhall I reſigne my ſelfe? and wherin ſhall I forſake my ſelfe? Allwaies, and in euery thing, as wel in little as in great. I do except nothing, but doe re-

quire that thou be as it were naked and void of all thing. Otherwise how canst thou be perfectly mine, and I thine, vnlesse both within and without, thou be free from all selfe will? And how much the sooner thou dost this, so much the better shalt thou finde thy selfe: and how much the more fully and sincerly thou doost it, so much the more shalt thou please me, and so much the more shalt thou gaine.

2. Some there are that resigne themselues, but with some exception; For they put not their whole trust in God, and therfore doe labour to prouide for themselues. Some also at the first do offer all, but afterwards being assailed with temptations, doe returne againe to that which they

had left, and therfore they go not forwards in the way of vertue. Theſe shal not attaine to the true liberty of a pure hart, nor to the grace of my diuine familiarity, vnleſſe they firſt make an entire reſignation, and offer themſelues a daily ſacrifice vnto me. For without this can neuer be obtained the vnion with me, wherwith my Saints enioy me.

3. I haue often ſaid vnto thee, and now againe I ſay the ſame: Forſake thy ſelfe, reſigne thy ſelfe, and thou shalt enioy internall peace. Giue all for all, ſeeke nothing, require nothing, repoſe thy ſelfe purely and with ayful confidence in me, and I wil giue my ſelfe vnto thee, & darknes shall not couer thee. Let this be thy whole endeauour, lett this be thy praiſe, let this be thy deſir,

desir, that casting off al propriety, thou maist all naked follow thy naked Sauiour Iesus: and dying to thy selfe, maist liue eternally to me. Then shal vaine fantasies, euil perturbations, and all superfluous cares fly away: then shall immoderate feare leaue thee, & inordinate loue shall dye.

Of good gouuernement in outward things: and of recourse to god in dangers.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

SOnne, thou oughtest with al diligence to procure, that in euery place, action, and externall businesse, thou be inwardly free, and maister of thy selfe, & that all thinges be vnder thy disposition, and thou not subiect to

them; that thou maiſt be Lord and Maiſter of thy actions, not a ſeruant or a hireling, but rather a free man, & a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot & freedome of the ſonnes of God, who put the things that are preſent vnder their feet, and place their thoughts on that which is eternall: who looke on tranſitory things with the left eye, & with the right, doe behold the things of heauen, who ſuffer not themſelues to be drawne to cleaue vnto them, but rather diſpoſe and vſe them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remaine firme and ſtedfaſt in all euents, and doeſt not weigh by the outward ap-

parence, nor with a carnall eye, the thinges which thou seest & heareſt, but presently in euery occasion dooſt enter with Moyses into the Tabernacle to aske counsell of our Lord, thou shalt somtimes heare the diuine & celestiall oracle, and shalt returne instructed of many thinges both present & to come. Moyses had alwaies recourse to the Tabernacle for the deciding of al doubts & obscure questiõs, & fled to the help of prayer, for the remedy of the iniquity and dangers of men. So oughteſt thou in like manner to fly to the closet of thy hart, earneſtly craving the diuine fauour. For the Scripture testifieth, that therfore was Iosue and the childrẽ of Israel deceaued by the Gabaonites, because they consulted not firſt with God, but gi-

uing too lightly credit to fayre wordes, were deluded with counterfaite piety.

That a man be not ouer-earneſt in his affaires.

CHAP. XXXIX.

SOnne, alwaies commit thy cauſe to me, I will diſpoſe well of it in due time: expect my ordination, and thou ſhalt find it wil be for thy good. Lord, I doe moſt willingly commit all vnto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I cleaued not too much to future euents, but offered my ſelfe with all readineſſe of minde to thy diuine pleaſure!

2. Sonne, oftentimes a man doth earneſtly labour for that which he deſireth, and when he

hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another minde, and not to esteme so much of it, as before he did: for mans affections doe not long continue fixed on one thing, but doe passe from one to another. It is therfore a matter, not of least moment, to forsake our selues euē in the least things.

3. The true spirituall profit of man, consisteth in denying & forsaking of himselfe: & he that is resigned, liueth in great freedome and security. But the ancient enemy, who alwaies laboureth to withstand the seruants of God, omitteth at noe time his wonted temptations, but day and night lieth still in waite, to cast the vnwary, if he cā, into the snare of deceipt. Watch therfore & pray, saith our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

That man hath no good of himselfe, nor any thinge wherof he can glory.

CHAPT. XL.

LOrd, what is man, that thou art mindfull of him, or the sonne of man, that thou vouchsafest to visit him? What hath man deserued that thou shouldest giue him thy grace? Lord, what cause haue I to complaine, if thou forsake me? Or if thou doest not that which I desire, what can I iustly say against it? Surely, this I may truly thinke and say: Lord I am nothing, I can do nothing, I haue nothing that is good of my selfe: but in all thinges I doe fayle, and am defectiue, and doe euer tend to no-

thing : vnleſſe thou helpe me, and doeſt interiourly inſtruct me. I become cold, and am diſſolued.

2. But thou, O Lord, art alwaies the ſame, and endureſt for euer, alwaies good, iuſt, & holy, doing all things well, iuſtly, and holily, and diſpoſing al thinges with wiſdome. But I that am more inclined to fall, then to goe forwardes, doe neuer continue in one eſtate : for I am ſeauen tymes a day changed : yet doth it ſoone turne to the better, when it ſo pleaſeth thee, and when thou vouchſafeſt to ſtretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canſt help me without the fauour of man, and ſo ſtrengthen me, that my countenance ſhall be no more changed, but my hart ſhalbe con-

uerted and reſt in thee alone.

3. Wherfore if I conld once perfectly forſake all humane cõfort, ether for the loue of deuotion, or for mine owne neceſſity, which inforceth me to ſeek after thee (for none els can comfort me) then might I wel hope in thy grace, and reioyce in the gift of new conſolation.

4. Thankes be vnto thee, from whence al procedeth, as often as it goeth well with me: but I am meere vanity, and nothing before thee, an vnconſtant and weake man. Wherof then can I glory? Or why doe I deſire to be eſteemed? Is it not of nothing? And this is moſt vayne. Trulie vaine glory is an euil plague and very greate vanity: becauſe it draweth from true glory, & robbeth the ſoule of heauenly grace.

For whilst a mā pleaseth himself, he displeaseth thee: whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is depriued of true vertue.

5. But it is true glory, & holy exultation, and ioy, for a man to glory in thee, and not in himself; to reioyce in thy name, & not in his owne vertue, nor to delight in any creature, but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy worke, not mine: let thy holy name be for euer blessed, but to me lett noe part of mens praises be giuen. Thou art my glory, thou art the ioy of my hart. In thee wil I glory & reioyce all the day; but for my selfe I wil not ioy, but in my infirmityes.

6. Let the Iewes seeke the glory which one man giueth to another: I will desire this, which is

from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporall honour, all worldly highneſſe, compared to thy eternall glory, is vanity and folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, moſt Bleſſed Trinity, to thee alone be all praiſe, honour, vertue, & glory for all eternity.

Of the contempt of all temporall Honours.

CHAPT. XLI.

SOnne, trouble not thy ſelfe, if thou ſeeſt others honored and aduanced, and thy ſelfe contẽned & debaſed. Lift vp thy hart vnto me in heauen, & the contempt of men in earth wil not greeue thee. Lord, we are blind, & quickly ſeduced with vanity. If I looke well into my ſelf, I can-

not say, that any creature hath done me wrong, & therfor, I cannot iustly complaine of thee.

2. But because I haue often & greeuously sinned against thee, all creatures doe iustly take armes against me: for shame and contempt is due vnto me, but vnto thee praise, honour, and glorie. And vnlesse I do so prepare my selfe, that I be willing, and doe reioyce to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed nothing at all, I cannot obtaine internall strength and peace, nor be spiritually enlightned, nor wholy vnited vnto thee.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

CHAP. XLII.

SOnne, if the peace thou haſt with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou haſt of him, or on the contentment thou receaueſt in his company, thou ſhalt euer be vnconſtant & ſubiect to diſquiet: but if thou haue recourſe vnto the euer-liuing & eternall Truth, a friend going frō thee or dying ſhal not greeue thee. The loue of thy friend ought to reſt in me, and for me is he to be beloued, whoſoeuer he be whom thou thinkeſt well of, and is verily deare vnto thee in this life. No friendſhip can auaile, or continue without

mei; nether is the loue true and pure, which they haue, whose hartes are not ioyned together by me. Thou oughtest to be so dead to such affections of beloued friends, that (forasmuch as appertaineth vnto thee) thou shouldest wish to be without all company of men. Man approacheth so much the neerer vnto God, by how much the further off he departeth from all earthlie comfort: so much the higher also he ascendeth vnto God, by how much lower he descendeth into himself, and how much the baser he is in his owne conceipt.

2. But he that attributeth any good vnto himself, hindreth the comming of Gods grace into him. For the grace of the holy Ghost, euer seeketh an humble hart. If thou couldest perfectly

anihilate thy ſelfe, & purge thy ſelfe of all created loue, then should ther flow into thee great aboundance of my grace. When thou caſteſt thyne eyes on creatures, the ſight of thy Creatour is taken from thee. Learne to ouercome thy ſelfe in all things, for the loue of thy Creatour, & then shalt thou be able to attaine to heauenly knowledge. How little ſoeuer it be, if it be inordinatly loued and regarded, it defileth the ſoule, and hindreth the enioying of the chiefeſt good.

Againſt vaine and ſecular Knowledge.

CHAPT. XLIII.

SOnne, let not the faire ſpeaches and ſubtile ſayinges of

men moue thee, for the Kingedome of God consisteth not in wordes, but in vertue. Obserue well the words which I speake; for they inflame the hart, & enlighten the minde, induce compunction, and bring sundry comforts. Doe thou neuer reade to shew thy selfe learned or wise: but labour to mortify thy vices, for that wil profit thee more, then the knowledge of many hard and difficult questions.

2. When thou shalt haue read and knowne many thinges, thou oughtest euer to returne to one beginning I am he that teacheth man all knowledge: and doe giue to little ones a more cleare vnderstanding, then can be taught by man. He therfore, to whom, I speake, shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in spirit.

Woe be to them that inquire many curious thinges of men, and doe little desire to knowe the way how to serue me. The time will come, when the Master of Masters, Christ the Lord of Angells shall appeare, to heare the lesſõs of all, that is, to examine the consciences of euery one: and then he will search Hierusalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darkenesse shall be laid open, & the inuentions of tongues shall be silent.

3. I am he that in an instant doe raise vp the humble minde, to vnderstand more reasons of the euerlasting truth, then can be gotten by ten yeares study in schooles. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of argu-

arguments, I am he that teacheth to despise earthly thinges, to loath things present, to seeke the euerlasting, to delight in the thinges that are eternall, to fly honours, to suffer scandalls, to place al hope in me, to desire nothinge out of me, and aboue all things feruently to loue me.

4. For one by louing me entirely, learned diuine things, & spake wonders: he profited more in forsaking all thinges, then in studying subtilities. To some I speak ordinary things, to others, things more especiall: to some I appeare sweetly by signes and figures, but to some I reueale misteries with much light. The voice of bookes is one, but it teacheth not all mē alike. For I am the internall teacher, I am the Truth, the searcher of the harte;

the vnderſtander of thoughtes, the ſetter forwardes of good works, diſtributing to euery one according to my will.

Of not drawing outwarde things to our ſelues.

CHAP. XLIIII.

SOnne, in many things thou oughteſt to be ignorant, and eſteeme thy ſelfe as dead vpon earth; and as one to whom the whole world is crucified. Thou muſt alſo paſſe ouer many thinges with a deafe eare, and rather thinke of that, which appertaineth to thy peace It is more profitable to turne thine eyes from the ſight of vnpleaſing thinges, and to leaue vnto euery one his owne opinion, thē to ſtriue with

contentious words. If thou ſtandeſt well with God, and conſidereſt his iudgments, thou shalt the more eaſily yeild to the will of others.

2. O Lord, to what an eſtate are we come! Beholde, we bewaile a temporall loſſe, and for a little gaine we toile and ſpare no labour, and the ſpirituall domage of our ſoule is forgotten, and hardly at length called to mind. That which little or nothing profiteth, is alwaies remembred, & that which is chiefly neceſſary, is negligently paſſed ouer, becauſe mans nature carrieth him to externall thinges, and vnleſſe he quickly returne vnto himſelf, he lyeth drowned in them with delight.

That credit is not to be giuen to all men: and how prone man is to offend in wordes.

CHAP. XLV.

HElpe me Lord, in my tribulation, for vaine is the defence of man. How often haue I bene deceaued, finding want of faith, where I thought it ſure: And how often haue I founde faith, where I leaſt expected it? It is vaine therefore to truſt in men, but the ſafety of the iuſt, O Lord, is in thee. Bleſſed be thou my God, in all thinges that befall vs. We are weake and inconſtant, quickly deceaued, and ſoone changed.

2. Who is he, that is able ſo warily to keepe himſelfe, that

he neuer fall into any deceipt or doubt ? But he that truſteth in thee O Lord, and ſeeketh with a pure hart, doth not eaſily fall; and if he fal into any tribulation, be he neuer ſo much inthralled, yet he shall quickly be deliured or comforted by thee, for thou wilt not forſake him for euer, that truſteth in thee. The friend is rare to be found, that continueth faithfull in his friends diſtreſſe: but thou, O Lord, thou alone art faithful at all times, and there is none like vnto thee.

3. O how wiſe was that holy ſoule that ſaid: My minde is firmly ſetled, and grounded in Chriſt! If it were ſo with me, then would not humane feare ſo eaſily trouble me, nor wordes moue me. Who can forſee all things? Who is able to beware

before hand, of future euils? If things euen foreſeene do oftentimes hurt vs, how can thinges vnlooked for, chooſe but wound vs grieuouſly? But why did I not prouid better for my ſelfe, miſerable wretch? Why alſo haue I ſo eaſily giuen credit to others? But alas we are men,, and God knoweth, weak and fraile men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whom ſhal I giue credit Lord? to whom but to thee? Thou art the truth that nether doeſt deceaue, nor canſt be deceaued. And on the other ſide, euery man is a liar, weake, vnconſtant and ſubiect to fall, eſpecially in wordes: and therfore we muſt not eaſily giue credit euen to that, which in outward shew ſeemeth at the firſt a certaine truth.

4. O with how great wiſedome haſt thou warned vs to take heed of men! And becauſe the enemies of man are his familiar and domeſticall acquaintance, not to truſt, if one ſhould ſay: Behold heere, or behold there. I am taught to my coſt, and I would to God I might thereby increaſe my care, and not my folly. Be wary, ſayth one, be wary, keepe vnto thy ſelf what I tell thee: and whilſt I hold my peace, and thinke it is ſecret, he connot keepe that ſecret, which he deſired should be ſecret, but preſently diſcloſeth me and himſelfe, and goeth his way. From ſuch tales, and ſuch improuident people, protect me Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor euer commit ſuch errours. Giue me grace my God to

obſerue truth, and conſtancy in my words, and remoue far from me a deceiptfull tongue. What I am not willing to ſuffer, I ought by all meanes to auoid.

5. O how good and quiet a thing it is to be ſilent, and not to talke of others, nor to beleeue all that is ſaid, nor eaſily to report what we haue heard; to lay ones ſelfe open to fewe; alwaies to ſeeke after thee, the beholder of the harts; nor to be carried about with euery winde of wordes, but to deſire that all thinges both within and without, be accomplished according to thy wil and pleaſure. How ſecure is it for the keeping of heauenly grace, to fly the ſight of men? And not to ſeeke thoſe thinges, that ſeeme to cauſe admiratiõ abroad, but to follow that with all di-

ligence, which bringeth amendment of life, and increase of feruour.

6. To how many hath vertue, knowne and ouer hastily commended, beene hurtfull? How profitable hath grace bene, kept with silence in this mortall life, which is nothing but a perpetual temptation, and a warfare?

Of puttinge our trust in God, when euill words arise.

CHAP. XLVI.

SOnne, be constant, and put thy trust in me. For what are wordes, but wordes? They passe through the ayre, but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingy to amend thy selfe: if

thou be innocent, reſolue to ſuffer this willingly, at leaſt for God. It is a ſmall matter to ſuffer ſometimes a few words, if thou haſt not yet the courage to endure ſtripes. And why doe ſmall matters goe to thy hart, but for that thou art yet carnall, and regardeſt men more then thou oughteſt? Becauſe thou art afraid to be deſpiſed, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and therfore ſeekeſt shaddowes of excuſes.

2. But looke better into thy ſelfe and thou shalt ſee, that the world yet liueth in thee, and a vaine deſire to pleaſe men. For when thou refuſeſt to be humbled, & reproued for thy faults, it is ſurely euident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world, nor the world per-

fectly crucified to thee. But giue diligent eare to my wordes, and thou shalt little respect ten thousand words spoken by men. Behold, if all should be spoken against thee, that coulde be most maliciously inuẽted, what would it hurt thee, if thou sufferedst it to passe, and madest no reckoninge at all of it? Could all those wordes, plucke as much as one haire from thy head?

3. But he that hath not his heart within him, nor God before his eyes, is easily moued with euery little dispraise, when as he that trusteth in me, & confideth not in his own iudgment, shall be free from humane feares. For I am the Iudge and the discerner of all secrets. I know how the matter passed, I know him that offereth the iniury, and

him that ſuffereth it. From me hath this word proceeded, this hath happened by my permiſſion, that out of many harts, thoughts may be reuealed. I shal iudge the guiltie and the innocent, but by ſecret iudgment I would beforehand try them both.

4. The teſtimony of men oftentimes deceaueth: my iudgement is alwaies true, it shal ſtand, and not be ouerthrowne. It is commonly hidden and ſecret, & not knowne in euery thinge but to few: notwithſtandinge it neuer erreth, neither can it erre, although to the eies of the fooliſh, it ſeemes not right. Men ought therefore to returne to me in euery iudgment, and not to ſtand in their owne opinions. For the iuſt man will not be troubled, whatſoeuer happeneth vnto him

for God : and if any thinge be wrongfully brought forth against him, he will not much care, neither wil he vainely be glad, if by others he be with reason excused. For he considereth that I am he, that searcheth the hart & reines, & do iudg, not according to the outward face, nor humane apparence. For that is oftentimes found culpable in my sight, that in the iudgement of men is commendable.

5. O Lord my God, the iust ludge, strong and patient, thou knowest the frailty and peruersity of man, be thou my strength, and all my trust, for mine owne conscience sufficeth me not, Thou knowest that which I cannot reach vnto, and therefore in euery reprehension, I ought to haue submitted my selfe, and to

haue borne it patiently: vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I haue fayled herein, & giue me againe grace of greater sufferance. For thy bountifull mercy is more auaylable to me for the obtayning of pardon, then my conceaued iustice, for the defence of my hidden conscience. Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby iustifie my selfe; for if thy mercy be away, no man liuinge shalbe iustified in thy sight.

That all grieuous thinges are to be endured for life euerlasting.

CHAPT. XLVII.

SOnne, let not the paines dismay thee, which thou haste vndertaken for me, neither be

thou diſcomforted for the tribulations which doe befall thee; but let my promiſe ſtrengthen and comfort thee in all euents. I am able to reward thee aboue al meaſure. Thou shalt not longe toile here, nor alwais be oppreſſed with griefe. Attend a while, and thou shalt ſee a ſpeedy end of thy euils. There will come an houre, when all labour and trouble shall ceaſe. Litle, and short, is all that paſſeth away with time.

2. Doe as thou doeſt, labour faithfully in my vineyard, I will be thy reward. Write, reade, ſing, mourne, obſerue ſilence, pray, ſuffer croſſes manfully: life euerlaſting is worthy of al theſe, and greater combats. Peace shall come in the day which is known vnto our Lord, and it shall not be day nor night, to wit, of this

time, but euerlasting light, infinite brightnesse, stedfast peace, and secure rest. Then thou shalt not say. who shall deliuer me from the body of this death? nor cry. Woe be vnto me, for that my dwelling in a strange countrey is prolonged! For death shal be throwne downe, and health shall be without decay, no anxiety, but blessed ioy, sweet and glorious company.

3. O if thou hadst seene the euerlasting crowns of the Saints in heauen, and with how great glory they now reioyce, who in times past were contemptible to this world, & esteemed vnworthy of life it selfe, truly thou wouldest presently humble thy selfe euen vnto the earth: and wouldest rather seeke to be vnder the feete of all, then to haue com-

command, so much as ouer one: nether wouldst thou desire pleasant dayes of this life, but rather reioyce to be afflicted for God, & esteeme it thy greatest gaine to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, & didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy hart, how durst thou so much as once to complaine! Are not all painefull labours to be endured for euerlasting life? It is no small matter to loose or to gaine, the Kingedome of heauen. Lift vp thine eyes therfore vnto heauen: behold I and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, do now reioyce, now are cōforted, now are secure, now do rest, & shal remain with me euerlastingly in the Kingdom of my Father.

Of the euerlastinge day, and shortnesse of this life.

CHAPT. XLVIII.

O Most blessed mansion of the heauenly Citty! O most cleare day of Eternity, which night obscureth not, but the lightest truth euer enlightneth: day euer pleasant, euer secure, and neuer changing into contrarie state! O that, that day would once appeare, and all these temporall things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth glisteringe with euerlasting brightnesse, but to those that are Pilgrimes vpon earth, it appeareth only a far off, and as it were through a glasse.

2. The inhabitants of heauen, doe know, how ioyfull that

day is: but the banished children of Eue bewaile the bitternes and tediousnes of this. The dayes of this life are short and euill, full of sorrow and anguish, where man is defiled with many sinnes, incumbered with many passions, disquieted with many feares, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errours, worne away with many labours, vexed with temptations, weakned with delights, tormented with want.

3. O when shall these euils be at an end! When shall I be deliuered from the miserable bondage of sin! When shal I thinke, O Lord of thee alone! When shall I perfectly reioyce in thee! When shall I be free from al impediments in true liberty, with-

out all griefe of mind and body! When shall I haue firme peace, peace ſecure, and without trouble, peace within and without, peace euery way aſſured! O good Ieſu, when shall I ſtand to behold thee! When shall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdome! When wilt thou be vnto me all in all thinges! O when shall I be with thee in thy Kingdome, which thou haſt prepared for thy beloued, from before all worldes! I am left a poore and banished man in the land of mine enemies, where there are daily warres, and great misfortunes.

4. Comfort my banishment, aſſwage my ſorrowe: for my whole deſire ſendeth vpp ſighes vnto thee. For all is burdenſome to me, whatſoeuer this world offereth for my comfort.

I desire familiarlie to enioy thee, but I cānot attaine vnto it. I would gladly fixe my harte to the thinges of heauen, but temporal cares and vnmortified passions weigh me downe. In mind I would be aboue all things, but to my flesh I am inforced to be subiect against my will. Thus, vnhappy mā that I am, I fight against my self, & am become grieuous to my self, whilst my spirit seeketh after the thinges that are aboue, & my flesh that which is below.

5. O what doe I inwardly suffer, when in mind I consider heauenly things, & presently in my prayers a multitude of fleshly fantasies, present themselues before me! My God, be not farre from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy seruant. Cast forth thy lightning, and disperse them: send

out thy darts, and breake all the fantaſies of my enemy. Gather my ſenſes together vnto thee: make me forget the thinges of this world: grant me grace to caſt away ſpeedily, the fantaſies of vices. Sucour me, ô euerlaſting truth, that no vanity may moue me. Come heauenly ſweetneſſe, and let all impurity fly from thy face. Pardon me alſo, and mercifully forgiue me as often as in prayer I think vpon any thing els beſides thee. I truly confeſſe, that I am wont to be ſubiect to many diſtractions: for oftentimes I am not there, where I doe corporally ſtād, or ſit, but rather there, whither my thoughts doe carry me. Where my thought is, there am I: there is oftentimes my thought, where my affections. That quickly oc-

curreth vnto me, which is naturally delightſome, and by cuſtome pleaſing.

6. And for this cauſe, thou that art truth it ſelfe, haſt plainely ſaid. Where thy treaſure is there is alſo thy hart. If I loue heauen, I willingly thinke of heauenly things. If I loue the world, I reioyce at the felicity of the world, and greeue for the aduerſity therof. If I loue the flesh, I imagine oftentimes thoſe thinges that are pleaſing to the flesh. If I loue the ſpirit, I delight to think of ſpirituall things. For whatſoeuer I loue, thereof doe I willingly ſpeake, and heare, and carry home with me the formes & repreſentations therof. O bleſſed is that man, that for thee, ô Lord, forſaketh all creatures; that violently reſiſteth

nature, and out of the feruour of ſpirit, crucifieth the concupiſcences of the flesh: that with a cleare conſcience, he may offer ſincere prayers vnto thee, and be worthy of the company of the angelicall quiers, all earthly things, outwardly and inwardly, being excluded.

Of the deſire of euerlaſting life, & how great rewards are promiſed to thoſe that fight valiantly.

CHAP. XLIX.

SOnne, when thou perceaueſt the deſire of euerlaſting blis to be giuen thee, from aboue, thou deſireſt to depart out of the Tabernacle of this body, that thou maiſt without shaddow of

any interchang behold my light; open thy hart, and receaue this holy inſpiration with thy whole deſire. Giue great thanks to the heauenly goodneſſe, that dealeth with thee ſo fauourably, viſiteth thee mercifully, ſtirreth thee vp feruently, holdeth thee vpp powerfully, leaſt through thine owne weight, thou fall down to the vanities of the earth. Nether doeſt thou obtaine this by thine owne thought or endeauour, but by the only fauour of heauenly grace & diuine bounty, that thou maiſt profit in vertue, and obtaine greater humility, and prepare thy ſelf to future battailes, & endeauour to cleaue vnto me, with the whole affection of thy hart, & ſerue me with a feruent deſire.

2. Sonne, fire often burneth,

but the flame aſcendeth not vp without ſmoke: ſo likwiſe the deſires of ſome men are earneſtly carried to heauenly things, and yet they are not free from temptation of carnall affection: and therfore it is not altogether purely for the honour of God, that which they ſo earneſtly requeſt of him. Such is alſo oftentimes thy deſir, which with ſuch importunity thou preſenteſt vnto me. For that is not pure & perfect, which is infected and defiled with the loue of thine owne proper commodity and intereſt.

3. Aske not that which is delightſome and profitable to thee, but that which is gratefull to me, and appertaineth to my honour, for if thou iudgeſt aright, thou oughteſt to preferre and follow my appointment,

father then thine owne desire, or any desired thing. I know thy desire, and haue heard thy often grones. Now thou wouldest be in the freedome of the glory of the Sonnes of God: now doth the euerlasting habitation, and the heauenly Country full of ioy, delight thee, but this houre is not yet come: it is yet another time, to witt, of warre, a time of labour and triall. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefest good, but thou canst not attaine it for the present. I am he, saith our Lord, expect vntil the kingdome of God doth come.

4. Thou art yet to be tryed vpon earth, and to be exercised in many thinges. Comfort shall be sometimes giuen thee, but aboundant fulnes therof shall not be graunted. Take courage

therfore, and be constant as wel in doing, as in suffering things contrary to nature. Thou oughtest to put on a new man, and to be changed into another. Thou must oftentimes doe that which thou wouldest not, and leaue vndone that thou wouldest doe. That which is pleasing to others, shall goe well forwards, that which thou wisheſt, shall not speed. That which others say, shall be nothing regarded. Others shall aske, and shall receaue, thou shalt aske and not obtaine.

5. Others shall be great in the praises of men, but of thee there shal be no speach; to others this or that shall be committed, but thou shalt be accompted fit for nothing. At this, nature will somtimes repine, and it is much

if thou endureſt it with ſilence. In theſe and ſuch like, a faithfull ſeruant of our Lord is wont to be tryed, how he can deny & ouercome himſelfe in all things. There is ſcarce any thing, wherin thou haſt ſuch need to mortify thy ſelfe, as in ſeeing & ſuffering thoſe things that are contrary to thy will, eſpecially when that is commãded, which ſemeeth vnto thee inconuenient, or to little purpoſe. And for that thou being placed vnder authority, dareſt not reſiſt a higher power, therfore it ſeemeth hard vnto thee, to walke at the becke of another, & to leaue wholy thine owne opinion.

6. But conſider, Sonne, the fruit of theſe labours, the end neere at hand, and the reward aboue all meaſure, & thou ſhalt

receaue noe griefe thereby, but greate comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that little of thy will which now thou willingly forſakeſt, thou ſhalt alwaies haue thy will in heauen. There thou ſhalt haue al that thou wilt, or canſt deſire: there thou ſhalt enioy all good, without feare of looſing it: there ſhall thy wil be euer one with me; it ſhall deſire nothing, ſtrange or priuate; there noe man ſhall withſtand thee, no man complaine of thee, noe man hinder thee, nothing come againſt thee: but al things deſired ſhal be there together preſent, & delight thy whole deſire, & fulfill it to the higheſt degree: there I will giue thee glory for the reproach which heere thou ſuffereſt; a garment of praiſe, for former griefe; for the loweſt place,

a seat of an euerlasting Kingdom: there shall the fruite of obedience appeare, the labour of pennance reioyce, and humble subiection shal be gloriously crowned.

7. Now therfore, bow thy selfe with great humility vnder the hands of all, and regard not who said, or commanded this; but take great heed, that whether thy Superiour, or thy Inferiour, or thine equall require any thing of thee, or doe insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeauour to fulfill it with a sincere intention. Let one seek this, another that, one glory in this, an other in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times; but doe thou nether reioyce in this, nor in that, but in the contempt

of thy selfe, and in my pleasure and honour alone. This art thou to wish, that whether by life or death, God may be alwaies glorified in thee.

How a desolate person, ought to offer himselfe into the hands of God.

CHAPT. L.

LOrd God, Holy Father, thy holy name be now and for euer blessed, because as thou wilt, so is it done, & what thou doest, is good. Let thy seruant reioyce in thee, not in himselfe, nor any thing els, for thou alone, o Lord, art the true gladnesse, thou art my hope and my crowne, thou art my ioy and my honour. What hath thy seruant, but what he hath receaued from thee,

light of men, and much afflicted with passions & infirmities, that he may rise againe with thee, in the rising of new light, and be clarified in heauen. Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it, and wilt haue it so and this is fullfilled which thy selfe hast commanded.

4. It is a grace and a fauour to thy friend to suffer, and to be afflicted in the world for the loue of thee, how often soeuer, & by whomsoeuer thou permitest it to fall vpon him. Without thy counsell and prouidence, and without cause, nothing is is done in earth. It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learne thy righteous iudgments, and cast away all haughtines of hart and presumption. It is profitable to me, that shame

hath couered my face, that I may rather seeke to thee for comfort, then to men. I haue learned allso hereby, to dread thy inscrutable iudgement, that afflictest the iust with the wicked, but not without equity and iustice.

5. I giue thee thankes, that thou hast not spared my sinnes, but hast worne me away by bitter stirpes, inflictinge sorrowes, and sendinge greeues, within and without. There is none vnder heauen that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heauenly Phisitian of soules, that strikest and healest, bringest into hell, and drawest out againe: let thy correction be vpon me, and let thy rod instruct me.

6. Behold, beloued Father, I

am in thy hands, I bow my selfe vnder the rod of thy correction: let my neck and shoulders feele the stirpes of thy chastisement, that my crookednesse may be conformed to thy wil. Make me a deuout and humble disciple of thine, as thou art wont well to doe, that I may be ready at euerie becke of thy diuine pleasure. I commend my selfe & all mine vnto thee to be corrected. It is better to be rebuked here, then hereafter. Thou knowest all and euerie thinge, and there is nothing hidden in the conscience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before thinges are done, thou knowest that they will happen, and hast no neede that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things, which are done on earth. Thou

knoweſt what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation is fit for purging the ruſt of my ſinns. Doe with me according to thy deſired pleaſure, & deſpiſe not my ſinful life, better & more clearly known to none, then to thee alone.

7. Graunt me; Lord, to know that which is to he knowne, to loue that, which is to be beloued, to praiſe that, which pleaſeth thee moſt: to eſteeme that, which is precious vnto thee, to deſpiſe that which is contemptible in thy ſight: ſuffer me not, to iudge according to the ſight of the exteriour eies, nor to giue ſentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men; but to determine of viſible & ſpiritual things with a true iudgment, & aboue al things euer to ſearch

after thy wil and pleasure.

8. The senses of men are often deceaued in their iudgments, the louers of the world, are also deceaued in louing only visible thinges. What is a man the better, for that he is esteemed great by man? The deceiptful man deceaueth the deceiptful, the vaine the vaine, the blind deceaueth the blind, & one feeble likewise another, whilst he exalteth and praiseth him. For how much euery one is in thy sight, so much he is, and noe more, saith humble S. Francis.

That a man ought to imploy himselfe in workes of humilitie, when force is wanting for higher exercises.

CHAPT. LI.

SOnne, thou art not able alwaies to cõtinue in the feruẽt desire of vertue, nor to persist in the high pitch of contemplation, but thou must sometimes of necessity by reason of originall corruption, descend to inferiour things, and beare the burthen of this corruptible life euen against thy will, and with irksomnes. As thou carriest a mortal body, so thou shalt feele trouble and heauines of hart, Thou oughtest therefore in flesh, oftentimes to bewaile the burthen

of flesh: for that thou canst not alwaies persevere in spirituall exercises, and diuine contemplation.

2. It is then expedient for thee to fly to humble & exteriour works, and to refresh thy selfe with good & vertuous actions, to expect with a firme confidence my comming, and heauenly visitation, to beare patiently thy banishment, and the drinesse of thy mind, till thou bee visited againe by me, and deliuered from all anxiety. For I will make thee forget thy former paines, & enioy inward quietnes. I will lay open before thee, the pleasant fieldes of holy Scripture, that with an enlarged harte, thou maist begin to run the way of my commaundments. And thou shalt say, that the sufferings of

this time are not condigne to the glory to come, that shall be reuealed in vs.

That a man ought to esteeme himselfe vnworthy of comfort, worthy of stripes.

CHAPT. LII.

LOrd, I am not worthy of thy comfort, nor of any spirituall visitation, and therfore thou dealest iustly with me, when thou leauest me poore and desolate. For if I could shed feares like a sea, yet I were not, worthy of thy comfort. For (alas) I deserue nothing, but to be scourged and punished, in that I haue grieuously and often offended thee, and sinned in many thinges. Al things therfore due-

ly considered, I am not worthy euen of the least comfort. But thou mild & merciful God, who wilt not that thy workes doe perish, to shew the riches of thy goodnesse in the vessels of mercy, euen beyond his desert, vouchsafest to comfort thy seruant aboue humane measure: for thy comforts are not like to the vaine words of men.

2. What haue I done, o Lord, that thou shouldest impart any heauenly comfort vnto me? I remember not that I haue euer done any good, but haue bene alwaies prone to sinne, and slouthful in my amendment. It is true, and I cannot deny it. If I should say otherwise, thou wouldest stand against me, and there would be none to defend me. What haue I deserued for my sinnes, but hel

and euerlasting fire ? I confesse in the truth of my hart, that I am worthy of all scorne and contempt, and it is vnfit that I should be remembred amongst thy deuout seruants. And although I be vnwilling to heare this, yet notwithstanding for the loue of truth, I will lay open my sinnes against my selfe, that I may the better deserue to obtaine thy mercy.

3. What shall I say being guilty, and full of confusion ? I can vtter out of my mouth no other worde, but this; I haue sinned, Lord, I haue sinned, haue mercie on me: pardon me, suffer me a little, that I may bewaile my griefe, before I go vnto the land of darknes, & be couered with the shaddow of death. What doest thou require of a guilty

and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite and sorrowfull, & doe humble himselfe for his offences? In true contrition and humblenes of harte, is bred a hope of forgiuenes; a troubled conscience is reconciled againe, grace lost is restored, man is defended from future wrath, and God & the penitent soule, meet together in the holy kisse of peace.

4. Humble contritiõ for sinns is an acceptable sacrifice vnto thee o Lord, sauouring much sweeter in thy sight then burning frankincese. This is also the pleasant ointment, which thou wouldest haue powred vpon thy sacred feet, for thou neuer despisest a contrite & humble hart. There, is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of our enemy: there, is amended,

& washed away whatsoeuer vncleanes hath bene elswher gathered, and whatsoeuer is defiled.

That the grace of God is not giuen to those that sauour of earthly things.

CHAPT. LIII.

SOnne, my grace is precious, it suffereth not it selfe to be mingled with externall things, nor earthly comforts. Thou oughtest therfore to cast away al hinderances of grace, if thou desire to receaue the infusion therof, Choose therfore a secret place to thy selfe, loue to liue alone with thy selfe, desire the conuersation of none: but rather powre out deuout praiers vnto God, that thou maist keepe thy

mind compunct,& thy cõscience pure. Esteeme the whole world as nothing : preferre my seruice before all outward thinges : for thou canst not attend vnto me, and be delighted also in transitory vanities. Thou oughtest to sequester thy self from thy acquaintance & friends, & to keep thy mind depriued of al temporall comfort. So the blessed Apostle Peter required, that the faithfull of Christ should keepe themselues as strangers & Pilgrims in this world.

2. O how greate a confidence shall he haue at the houre of death, whom noe affection to any earthly thing detaineth in the world. But the weake minde is not yet capable of so retired a part; nether doth the fleshly person, vnderstand the freedome of a

recollected mind. Notwithſtanding if he wilbe truly ſpirituall, he ought to renounce as wel that which is farre off as that which is neereſt vnto him, & to beware of no man more then of himſelf. If thou perfectly ouercome thy ſelfe, thou shalt with more eaſe ſubdue the reſt. It is a glorious victory to triumph ouer our ſelues, For he that keepeth himſelf ſubiect, in ſuch ſort that his ſenſuality be ſubued to reaſon, & reaſon in al things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerour of himſelfe, and Lord of the world.

3. If thou deſire to mount vnto this height of perfection, thou muſt begin manfully, and ſet the axe to the root, that thou maiſt plucke vp & deſtroy thy hidden and inordinat inclination to thy ſelfe, and vnto all priuate and earthly

earthly good. Of this vice (that man too inordinatly loueth himselfe) almost all dependeth, whatsoeuer is wholy to be ouercome and subdued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquility. But for that few endeauour perfectly to dye vnto themselues, & to forsake themselues wholy, therfore they remaine intangled in themselues, and cannot be lifted vp in spirit aboue themselues; but he that desireth to walke freely with me, it is necessary that he mortifie all his inordinate affections, & not adheare vnto any creature by priuate loue.

Of the different motions of Nature, and grace.

CHAP. LIV.

SOnne, marke diligently the motions of thine owne nature, and my grace; for in a very contrary and secret manner these are moued, and can hardly be discerned, but by him that is spirituall & inwardly enlightned. All men desire that which is good, & pretend some good in al their words and deedes, and therfore vnder pretence of good, many are deceaued. Nature is deceiptful and seduceth, intangleth, and deceaueth many, and alwaies proposeth herselfe for her ende, but grace walketh with great sincerity, & auoideth all shew of

euill, pretendeth not deceipts, but doth all things purely for God, in whom also she finally resteth.

2. Nature will not willingly dy, nor be kept in, nor be euercome, nor be subiect to any, nor be subdued: but grace laboureth to mortify her self, resisteth sensuallity, seeketh to be subiect, is willing to be ouercome, and will not vse her owne liberty: she loueth to be kept vnder discipline, and desireth not to rule any, but alwaies to liue & remaine wholie subiect vnto God; & for God, is readly humbly to bow vnto all men. Nature striueth for her owne commodity, and considereth what profit she may reape by another: but grace considereth not what is profitable and commodious vnto herselfe, but rather what is profitable to ma-

nie. Nature willingly receaueth honour and reuerence: but grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory vnto God.

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt, but grace reioyceth to suffer reproach for the name of Iesus. Nature loueth idlenes, and bodily rest, but grace cannot be idle, but willingly imbraceth labour. Nature seeketh to haue those things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is meane and base: but grace delighteth in plaine and humble things, despiseth not course and meane, nor refuseth to weare that which is old and torne. Nature respecteth the things of this world, reioyceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for losse, is moued with euery little iniurious word: but grace thinketh on that,

which is euerlasting, and cleaueth not to that which fadeth with time; she is not troubled with losse, nor exasperated with iniuries, for that she hath placed her treasure and ioy in heauen, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is couetous, and doth more willingly receaue thē giue, she loueth proper and priuate things; but grace is pittifull and liberall to all, auoydeth singularity, is content with a little, thinketh it happier to giue, then to receaue. Nature inclineth to creatures, yeildeth to her owne flesh, followeth vanities, and, listneth to discourses: but grace draweth vnto God, and seeketh after vertues, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth desires of the flesh, restraineth wandring abroad, blusheth to be seene

in publike. Nature is willing to haue ſome outward cõfort, wherin she may delight her ſenſes, but grace ſeeketh comfort in God alone and delighteh aboue al viſible things in the higheſt good.

5. Nature worketh all for her owne gaine and profit, she can doe nothing freely, but for beſtowed benefits: she hopeth to obtaine ether that which is equall, or better, ether praiſe or fauour: and coueteth to haue her workes & gifts much eſteemed: but grace ſeeketh no temporall thinge, nor asketh any other reward for her deſertes, then God alone, nor deſireth more of temporal neceſſaries, then what may ſerue her for the obtaining of euerlaſting glory.

6. Nature reioyceth to haue many friendes, and kinsfolkes,

she glorieth in noble birth and descent, pleaseth the powerfull, fawneth vpon the rich, applaudeth those that are like herselfe: but grace loueth her enemies, and is not puffed vp with multitude of friendes, nor esteemeth place or birth, but where it is ioyned with greater vertue, she rather fauoureth the poore, then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent, then the prowerfull, reioyceth in the simple, and respecteth not the deceiptfull. exhorteth euer the good to labour for the better gifts, and by vertue to resemble the Sonne of God. Nature quickly complaineth of any want, and trouble: grace constantly suffereth al kind of need.

7. Nature turneth all thinges to her selfe, striueth and conten-

deth for herſelfe : but grace reduceth all to God, from whence originally they proceed : she aſcribeth no good to her ſelfe, neither doth she arrogãtly preſume of her ſelfe, she contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others, but in euery ſenſe and vnderſtandinge, ſubmitteth her ſelfe vnto the eternall wiſedome, and to the diuine iudgement. Nature coueteth to know ſecrets, and to heare newes, she will appeare abroad, and make proofe of many thinges by the experience of her own ſenſes, she deſireth to be kowne, and to do thoſe things for which she may be praiſed and admired : but grace careth not for hearing newes, nor to vnderſtand curious matters, for that all this ſpringeth from the ancient diſorder of our

corrupt nature, seeing nothing that is newe, is durable vpon earth. She teacheth therefore to restraine the senses, to auoid vaine pleasing & ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of praise and admiration, and of euery thing & euery knowledge, to seeke profitable fruite, and the praise and honour of God: she will not haue her self nor hers publickly praised, but desireth that God should be blessed in his giftes, who of meere charity bestoweth all things.

8. This grace is a supernatural light, and a certaine speciall gift of God, and the proper marke of the elect, and pledge of euerlasting saluation, which lifteth vp a man from earthly basenes, to loue of heauensy things and of a carnall, maketh him a spirituall

perſon. How much the more therfore, nature is depreſſed & ſubdued, ſo much the greater grace is infuſed, and the inward man daily by new viſitations, more perfected according to the Image of God.

Of the corruption of Nature, & efficacy of diuine Grace.

CHAPT. LV.

MY God, who of thy meere goodnes haſt created me to thy Image & likeneſſe, graunt me this grace which thou haſt shewed to be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to ſaluation, that I may ouercome my wicked nature, which draweth me to ſinne, & to the loſſe of my ſoule. For I feele in my flesh the law of ſin,

contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captiue, to obey ſenſuality in many things: neither can I reſiſt the paſſions thereof, vnleſſe thy holy grace feruently infuſed into my hart, doe aſſiſt me.

2. Thy grace o Lord, & great grace is needfull, that nature may be ouercome, which is euer prone to euill from her youth. For by Adam the firſt man, it falling and being corrupted by ſinne, the penalty of this ſtaine hath deſcended vpon all mankind, in ſuch ſort, that nature it ſelfe which by thee was created good, & without defect, is now accompted for vice, and for the infirmity of a corrupted nature, for that the motion therof left vnto it ſelfe, draweth to euill and abiect things. For the little

force which remaineth, is like a certaine ſparke, lying hidden in ashes. This is naturall reaſon it ſelf compaſſed about with great darkneſſe, ſtill retayning power to diſcerne good and euill, and the diſtance betweene true and falſe, although it be vnable to fulfill all, that it approueth: and enioyeth not now the ful light of truth, nor the former integrity of her affections.

3. Hence it is, my God, that according to my inward man, I delight in thy law, knowing thy commandements to be good, iuſt, and holy, reprouing alſo all euill and ſinne, and doe know that it is to be fled. But in my flesh I ſerue the law of ſin, whilſt I rather obey ſenſuality then reaſon. Hence it is, that I haue a will to doe good, but know not

how to performe it. For this cause I often purpose many good things, but for that I want grace to help my infirmity, for a light resistance I go back, and faint. I know the way of perfection & see cleerly inough what I ought to doe, but pressed with the weight of mine owne corruption, I rise not vnto it.

4. O Lord, how needfull is thy grace for me, to begin any good worke, to go forward, and to accomplish it. For without it I can doe nothing, but in thee I can do al things, when thy grace doth comfort me. O heauenly grace, without which our owne merits are nothing, and no gifts of nature are to be esteemed! Arts riches, beauty, & strength, wit, or eloquence, are of noe worth with thee, o Lord, without thy

grace. For gifts of nature are common to good and euill, but the peculiar gift of the elect is grace and loue, wherwith being marked, they are esteemed worthy of euerlasting life, This grace so much excelleth, that neither the gifte of propheſy, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation how high soeuer, is of any esteeme without it Neither faith, nor hope, nor other vertues, are acceptable vnto thee without charity & grace.

5. O most blessed grace, that makest the poore in spirit, rich with vertues, and the rich in many blessings humble in hart, come downe vnto me, replenish me in the morning with thy comfort, least my soule should faint with wearines, and wither away with drineſſe of mind. I beseech

thee Lord, that I may find grace in thy ſight, for thy grace ſuffi-ceth, though other things that nature deſireth be wanting. If I be tempted and vexed with ma-ny tribulations, I will not feare euills, whilſt thy grace is with me: she is my ſtrength, she giueth aduiſe and helpe: she is ſtronger then all enemies, and viſer then all the wiſe.

6. Thy grace is the miſtreſſe of truth, the teacher of diſcipline, the light of the hart, the ſolace in affliction: she driueth away ſorrow, she expelleth feare, she is the nurſe of deuotion, the bringer forth of teares. What am I without it, but a rotten peece of wood. and an vnprofi-table ſtalke only meete for the fire? Let thy grace therfor, Lord, alwaies preuent me, & follow

me, & make me euer diligent in good works through Iesus Christ thy Sonne, Amen.

That we ought to deny our selues, and imitate Christ by the Crosse.

CHAP. LVI.

SOnne, looke how much thou cāst go out of thy self, so much maist thou enter into me. As to be voide of all desire of externall things, maketh inward peace; so the forsaking of our selues, ioyneth vs internally to God. I will haue thee learne the perfect leauing of thy selfe vnto my will, without cōtradiction & cōplaint. Follow me, I am the way, the truth and the life. Without the way there is no going, without truth ther is no knowledg; without

out life there is no liuing. I am the way which thou oughteſt to follow, the truth which thou oughteſt to hope. I am the way which cannot lead amiſſe, the truth which cannot erre, the life which cannot end. I am a moſt ſtrait way, a ſupreame truth, a true life, a bleſſed life, an increated life. If thou remaine in me, thou ſhalt know the truth, and truth ſhall deliuer thee, and thou ſhalt apprehend euerlaſting life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandements: if thou wilt know the truth, beleeue me. If thou wilt be perfect, ſell all. If thou wilt be my diſciple, deny thy ſelfe. If thou wilt poſſeſſe a bleſſed life, deſpiſe this preſent life. If thou wilt be exalted in heauen, humble

thy selfe vpon earth. If thou wilt raigne with me, beare the crosse with me. For only the seruants of the crosse, finde the way of blisse and true light.

3. Lord Iesus, forasmuch as thy way is narrow, strait & contemptible vnto the world, graunt me grace to imitate thee in suffering willingly all wordly contēpt. For the seruant is not greater thē his Lord, nor the Disciple aboue his Maister. Lett thy seruant be exercised in thy holy life, for there is the health & the true sanctity of my soule, whatsoeuer I read or heare besids, doth not recreate or delight me fully.

4. Sonne, now that thou knowest and hast read these thinges, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfill them. He that hath my commandements and

keepeth them, he it is that loueth me, and I will loue him, and will manifeſt my ſelfe vnto him, and will make him ſit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord Ieſus, as thou haſt ſaid and promiſed, ſo giue me grace to deſerue, that it be fulfilled. I haue receaued the Croſſe, I haue receaued it from thy hande, and I will beare it, and beare it till death, as thou haſt laid it vpon me. Truly the life of a good religious perſon, is the croſſe, and it is a ſure guide to heauen. It is now begunne, it is not lawful to go back, neither is it fit to leaue that which I haue vndertaken.

5. Let vs then take courage my brethren, and go forwards together. Ieſus willbe with vs, for Ieſus ſake we haue vndertaken

this crosse: for the loue of Iesus let us perseuere in the crosse. He will be our helper, who is our guid & forerunner. Behold our King goeth before vs, who also will fight for vs: let vs follow him cheerfully, let vs not be dismaied but be ready to dy with courage in the battaile, & let vs not blemish our glory, by flying from the Crosse.

That a man be not too much dejected, when he falleth into some defect.

CHAP. LVII.

SOnne, patience & humility in time of aduersity, are more pleasing to me then much comfort and deuotion in prosperity. Why art thou grieued for e-

tiery little trifle ſpoken and done againſt thee? Although it had bene much more, thou oughteſt not to haue bene moued. But now let it paſſe, it is not the firſt that hath happened, nor any new thing nether shall it be the laſt, if thou liue long. Thou art cheerfull inough, as long as noe aduerſity occurreth. Thou canſt giue good counſell alſo, & canſt ſtrengthen others with thy words but when any tribulation ſuddainly knocketh at thy doore, thou art deſtitute of counſell, and voyd of force. See therfore thy greate frailty, which thou often proueſt in euery ſmall occaſion. It is notwithſtanding permitted for thy good, when theſe and ſuch like occaſions befall thee.

2. Put it out of thy hart the

beſt thou canſt, and if it touch thee, yet let it not deiect thee, nor trouble thee long: beare it at leaſt patiently, if thou canſt not ioyfully. Although thou be vnwilling to heare it, and feeleſt in thy harte ſome motion of diſdaine, yet repreſſe thy ſelfe, and ſuffer no inordinate word to paſſe out of thy mouth, which may be a ſcandal to the weake, The ſtorme which now is raiſed, ſhall quickly be appeaſed, & inward griefe ſhall be aſſwaged by the returne of grace. I doe yet liue, ſaith our Lord, and am ready to helpe thee, and to giue thee greater comfort then before, if thou put thy truſt in me, and deuoutly calleſt vpon me.

3. Be more patient, and prepare thy ſelfe to greater ſuffe-

ring. All is not loſt if thou feele thy ſelfe often afflicted, or greeuouſly tempted. Thou art a man, and not God: thou art flesh, not an Angel. How canſt thou looke to continue euer in the ſame ſtate of vertue, when an Angell in heauen hath fallen, and the firſt man in Paradiſe loſt his ſtanding? I am, he that doe giue healthfull comfort to them that mourne, and doe raiſe vp vnto my God-head, thoſe that know their owne frailty.

4. Lord, bleſſed be thy ſacred worde, more ſweet vnto my mouth then the hony, and the hony combe What should I doe in theſe my ſo great tribulations & anguish, vnleſſe thou didſt comfort me with thy holy, ſweet, and heauenly ſpeaches? What matter is it, how much,

and what I ſuffer, ſo as I may at length attaine to the heauen of bliſſe? Grant me a good end, graunt me a happy paſſage out of this world. Be mindfull of me, my God, and direct me the ſtraight and ready way to thy euerlaſting Kingdome. Amen.

Of not ſearching into high matters, & into the ſecret iudgments of God.

CHAPT. LVIII.

SOnne, beware thou diſpute not of high matters, nor of the ſecret iudgments of God, why this man is forſaken, and he aſſumed to ſo great grace: why alſo this man is ſo much afflicted, and he ſo greatly aduanced. Theſe things exceed all humane

power, neither can any reaſon or diſcourſe of any man ſearch out the iudgement of God. When the enemy therfore ſuggeſteth theſe things vnto thee, or ſome enuious people demand them of thee, anſwere that of the Prophet: Thou art iuſt, o Lord, and thy iudgement is right. And againe: The iudgements of our Lord are true and iuſtified in themſelues. My iudgements are to be feared, not to be diſcuſſed, for they are ſuch as cannot be comprehended by the vnderſtanding of man.

2. In like manner I aduiſe thee not to inquire nor diſpute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier then the other, & which is greater in the kingdome of heauen. Theſe thinges oftentimes breed ſtrife and vn-

profitable contentions they nourish alſo pride and vaine glory, from whence doe vſually ſpring enuy & diſſentions, whilſt one will needs foolishly haue this Saint preferred, & the other, another. To deſire to know and ſearch out ſuch things, is to noe purpoſe, but to diſpleaſe the Saints, of whom they ſpeak. For I am not the God of diſſenſion but of peace, which peace conſiſteth rather in true humility, then in exalting our ſelues.

3. Some are carried with zeale of affection, to loue theſe or thoſe moſt, but this loue is rather humaine, then diuine, I haue made all the Saints, and haue giuen them grace: I haue made thé partaker of my glory, I know the merits of euery one, I haue preuented them in the benedic-

tions of my ſweetnes. I foreknew my beloued, before the beginning of the world. I choſe them out of the world, they choſe not me firſt. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them through ſundry temptations. I haue ſent them great inward comforts. I haue giuen them perſeuerance. I haue crowned their patience.

4. I know the firſt and laſt: I imbrace all with ineſtimable loue. Iam to be praiſed in al my Saints: I am to be bleſſed aboue all things, and to be honoured in euery one whom I haue thus glorioufly exalted, and predeſtinated without any preceedent merits of their owne. He therfore that contemneth one of the leaſt of my Saints, honoureth not the greateſt, for that I

made both the leſſe & the greater. And he that diſpraiſeth any of my Saints, diſpraiſeth alſo me and all the reſt in the Kingdome of heauen. All are one by the band of Charity, they think the ſame, they wil the ſame, and are all knit together in one perfect band of loue.

5. But yet (which is much more high) they loue me more then themſelues, and more then their owne merits. For being rauished aboue themſelues, and drawne out of the affection of themſelues, they tend wholy vnto the loue of me, in which alſo they reſt, enioying me with vnſpeakable glory. Nothing can put them backe, nothing preſſe them downe; for being full of euerlaſting truth, they burne with the fire of vnquenchable

charity. Let therfore carnall and earthly men, that can affect no other but priuate ioyes, forbeare to dispute of the state of Saints. They adde and take away according to their owne fancies, not as it pleaseth the euerlasting Truth.

9. There is in many great ignorance, specially in those that be slenderly enlightned; & these can seldome loue any with perfect spirituall loue. They are alwaies much drawne by a natural affection, and humane friendship to this man or to that, and according to the experience they haue of thēselues in their earthlie affections, so they frame an imagination of heauenly things. But there is an incomparable distance betweene the thinges, which the imperfect frame in

their conceipts, and thoſe which illuminated perſons do ſee by reuelation from aboue.

7. Beware therfore, my Sonne, that thou treat not curiouſly of theſe thinges, which exceed thy knowledg, but rather ſo apply thy endeauour, that thou maiſt at leaſt haue the meaneſt place in the Kingedome of heauen. And if any one did knowe which of the Saincts exceeded others in Sanctity, or is eſteemed great in the kingedome of heauen, what would this knowledg auaile him, vnleſſe he should thereby humble himſelfe the more in my ſight, and ſtirre vp his mind to praiſe my name with greater feruour. His labour is much more acceptable vnto God, that thinketh of the greatnes of his ſinnes, and his want of

vertues, and how far off he is from the perfection of the Saints, then he that disputeth of their greatnes. It is better to praye to the Saints with deuotion, and teares, & to craue their glorious suffrages with an humble mind. then to search their secrets with vaine curiosity.

8. They are wel & right wel contented, if men could content themselues, and refraine from these vaine discourses. They glorie not of their owne merits, for they ascribe no good vnto themselues, but attribut al to me, who of my infinity charity, haue bestowed my blessings vpon them. They are replenished with so great loue of my Godhead, and so superaboundant ioy, that there is no glory nor happines, that it, or can be wanting vnto them.

All the Saints, how much the higher they be in glory, so much the more humble they are in themselues, and neerer and neerer vnto me And therfore thou hast it written. That they did cast their Crownes before God, and fell downe vpon their face before the Lambe, and adored him that liueth for euer.

9. Many inquire who is greatest in the kingedome of God, that knowe not whether they shall euer be numbred there amongst the least. It is no small matter to be euen the least in heauen, where all are great: for that all there shall be called and shalbe indeed the sonnes of God. The least there shall be great among thousands, and the sinner of a hundred years shall die. For when the Disciples asked who

was

was the greater in the Kingdom of heauen, they receaued this answere. Vnlesse you be conuerted, & become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdome of heauen. Whosoeuer therfore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdome of heauen.

10. Woe be vnto them that disdaine to humble themselues willingly with little children. For the low gate of the Kingedome of heauen, will not giue them entrance. And woe be to the rich, that haue their comforts here, for whilst the poore enter into the Kingdom of God, they shall be waiting without. Reioyce you that be humble: & you that be poore, be you glad, for yours is the Kingdome of God, if you walke according vnto truth.

That all our hope and truſt is to be fixed in God alone.

CHAP. LIX.

LOrd, what truſt haue I in this world? Or what is the greateſt comfort that all things vnder heauen do yeild me? Is it not thou, my Lord God, whoſe mercies are without number? Where hath it bene well with me, without thee? Or when could it be ill with me, when thou wert preſent? I had rather be poore for thee, then rich without thee. I rather chooſe to be a Pilgrime in earth with thee, then to poſſeſſe heauen without thee. Wher thou art, there is heauen: and there is death and hell, where thou art not. Thou art my deſire,

and therfore it behoueth me to ſend forth deep ſighes from my hart, and crie & pray vnto thee. For I haue none to truſt vnto, none that can helpe me in time of neceſſity, but thou alone, my God. Thou art my hope, and my truſt; thou art my comforter, and moſt faithfull vnto me in all my diſtreſſes.

2. All men ſeeke their owne gaine, thou only ſeekeſt my ſaluation and my profit, and turneſt all things to my good. Although thou permitteſt many temptations to aſſault me, and many aduerſities to befal me, yet thou ordaineſt all this to my good and profit, who art wont to proue thy beloued ſeruants a thouſand waies. In which proof thou oughteſt no leſſe to be loued and praiſed, then if thou did-

deſt replenish me with heauenlie comforts.

3. In thee therfore, my Lord God, I put my whole hope and refuge: in thee I place my tribulation and auguish, for I finde all to be weake and vnconſtant whatſoeuer I behold out of thee. For nether can many frien-des anaile, nor forcible helpers aide, nor wiſe counſelours giue profitable anſwere, nor the bookes of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliuer, nor any ſecret, or pleaſant place defend, if thou thy ſelfe doeſt not aſſiſt, helpe, comfort, inſtructe, and keepe vs.

4. For all things that ſeeme to be ordayned for the reſt and ſolace of man, when thou art abſent, are nothing, and do bring indeede no ioy, nor comfort at

ill. Thou therfore art the end of all that is good, the light of life, the depth of wisdome: and the most forcible comfort of thy seruants, is to trust in thee aboue all thinges. To thee therfore doe I lift myne eyes: In thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my whole trust. Blesse and sanctify my soule with thy heauenly blessings, that it may be made thy holy habitation, & the seat of thy eternall glory: & that nothing may be found in the temple of thy greatnes, that may offend the eyes of thy Maiesty. According to the greatnesse of thy goodnesse, and multitude of thy mercies, take pitty vpon me, and heare the prayer of thy poor seruant, who is farr exiled from thee in the lād of the shadow of death.

Protect and keepe the ſoule of thy ſeruant, amidſt ſo many dangers of this corruptible life, and by the aſſiſtance of thy grace, direct it in the way of peace, to the country of euerlaſting light, Amen.

THE FOVRTH BOOKE.

A deuout Exhortation vnto the blessed Sacrament.

The voyce of Christ.

COme vnto me al yee that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you, saith our Lord. The breade which I will giue, is my fleshe, for the life of the world. Take yee and eate, this is my body that shall be deliured for you. Doe this for the commemoration.

of me. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my bloud, remaineth in me, and I him. The words which I haue ſpoken vnto you, are ſpirit and life.

With how great reuerence Chriſt ought to be receaued.

CHAPT. I.

THeſe are thy wordes O Chriſt, euerlaſting Truth, though not ſpoken all at one time nor written in one and the ſelfe ſame place. Becauſe therefor they are thine and true, they are all thankefully and faithfully to be receaued by me. They are thine, & thou haſt ſpoken them, and they are mine alſo, becauſe thou haſt ſpoken them for my ſaluation. I willingly receaue the

from thy mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my hart. These deuout wordes so full of sweetnesse and loue, doe stirre me vp, but mine owne offences doe amaze me, and my impure conscience driueth me backe from the receauing of so great mysteries. The sweetnesse of thy wordes doth encourage me; but the multitude of my sinnes doe oppresse me.

2. Thou commandest me to come confidently vnto thee, if I will haue part with thee: and to receaue the food of immortality, if I desire to obtaine euerlasting life and glory. Come, sayst thou, vnto me, all yee that labour & are burdened, and I will refresh you. O sweet and louely word in the eare of a sinner that

thou my Lord God shouldeſt inuite the poore and needy, to receaue thy moſt bleſſed body. But who am I Lord, that I may preſume to approach vnto thee? behold the heauens cannot containe thee, and thou ſayſt: Come yee all vnto me.

3. What meaneth this moſt pious benignity and louinge inuitation? How shall I dare to come, that know not any good in me, wherupon I may preſume: How shall I bring thee into my houſe, that haue often offended thy moſt gracious countenance? The Angels and the Archangels honour thee, the Saints and iuſt men do feare thee; and thou ſaiſt Come yee all vnto me. Vnleſſe thou O Lord dideſt ſay it, who would beleeue it to be true? And vnleſſe thou didſt commaund it,

who woulde dare to come vnto thee. Behold Noe a iuſt man laboured a hundred yeares in the buildinge of the Arke, that he might be ſaued with a few: and how can I in one houres ſpace prepare my ſelfe to receaue with reuerence the maker of the world?

4. Moyſes thy great ſeruant, and eſpeciall friend, made an Arke of incorruptible woode, which alſo he couered with moſt pure gold, to put the Tables of the Law therein: and I a rotten creature, how ſhall I ſo lightly dare to receaue the maker of the Law, and the giuer of life? Salomon the wiſeſt of the Kings of Iſrael, beſtowed ſeauen yeares in building a magnificent Temple, in praiſe of thy name, and celebrated the feaſt of the Dedi-

cation thereof eight daies together, he offered a thousand peaceable sacrifices, and set the Arke in place prepared for it, with the sound of trumpets, and of ioy: and I the most vnhappy & poorest of men, how shall I bringe thee into my house, that cā scarce spend one halfe houre deuoutlie? and I would to God it were once almost one halfe houre, in worthy and due manner!

5. O my God, how much did they endeauour to please thee, and alas how little is that which I doe? How short time doe I spend, when I prepare my selfe to receaue? I am seldome wholy recollected, very seldome altogether free from distraction, and yet surely noe vndecent thought should occure in the presence of thy Deity, nor any creature draw

me vnto it: for I am not to harbour an Angell, but the Lord of Angels.

6. And yet there is great difference betweene the Arke and the Reliques therof, & thy most pure body with his vnspeakable vertues: betweene those legall sacrifices, figures of future things and the true Sacrifice of thy body, the complement of all ancient Sacrifices. Why therfore doe I not become more feruent in thy venerable presence? Wherfore doe I not prepare my self with greater care to receaue thy sacred gifts, sith those holy anciēt Patriarches, and Prophetes; yea Kings also & Princes, with the whole people, haue shewd so great zeale of deuotion to thy diuine seruice?

7. The most deuout King Da-

uid, daunced before the Arke of God with all his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past vpon his Forefathers. He made Instruments of sundry kinds, he published Psalmes, and appointed them to be sung with ioy: himselfe also oftentimes played vpon the harpe. Being inspired with the grace of the holy Ghost, he taught the people of Israel to praise God with their whole hart, and with pleasant voices, euery day to blesse & praise him. If so great deuotion was then vsed, & such memory of diuine praise before the Arke of the Testament, what reuerence and deuotion is now to be performed by me, and all Christian people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receauing the most pretious body of Christ?

8. Many go to ſundry places to viſit the reliques of Saints, & are aſtonished when they heare of their miraculous works: they behold the ſpacious buildinges of their Churches, & kiſſe their ſacred bones wrapped in ſilke & golde. And behold thou art neerly preſent with me on the altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the maker of all things, and Lord of Angels, Oftentimes in thoſe deuotions there is but curioſity of men, and nouelty of the beholders in the ſeeing of ſuch ſights, and little fruit of amendment is gotten thereby, eſpecially where there is ſo vnconſtant à wandringe without true contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the altar, thou art preſent, my Lord, God and Man. Chriſt Ieſus, where alſo plenti-

bus

full fruit of euerlasting saluation is obtained, as often as thou art worthily, & deuoutly, receaued. No leuity, no curiosity, or sensuality draweth vnto this, but firme faith, deuout hope, and sincere charity.

9. O God the inuisible Creatour of the world, how wonderfully doest thou deale with vs! how sweetly & graciously doest thou dispose of all thinges with thy elect, to whom thou offerest thy self to be receaued in the Sacrament! O this exceedeth al vnderstanding of man: this chiefly draweth the harts of the deuout, and inflameth their desire. For thy true faithfull seruantes that dispose their whole life to amendement, by this most worthy Sacrament, oftentimes receaue great grace of deuotion,

and

and loue of vertue.

10. O admirable and hidden grace of this Sacrament, which only the faithfull of Christ doe know: but the vnfaithfull, and such as are slaues vnto sinne, cannot conceaue nor feele. In this Sacrament spirituall grace is giuen, and lost vertue is restored in the soule: and beauty disfigured by sinne, returneth againe. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of deuotion, which is here giuen, not only the mind, but the weake body also feeleth great increase of strēgth.

11. Our coldnesse and negligence surely is much to be bewailed and pitied: that we are not drawne with greater affection to receaue Christ, in whom all the hope and merit of those that are to be saued doth consist,

For he is our ſanctification and redemption; he is the comfort of paſſengers, and the euerlaſting fruition of ſaints. It is much therfore to be lamented, that many doe ſo little conſider this comfortable myſtery, which reioyceth heauen, & preſerueth the whole world. O blindnes and hardnes of mans hart, that doth not more deeply weigh the greatnes of ſo vnſpeakeable a gift, but rather by the daily vſe therof, comes to regard it little or nothing.

12. For if this moſt holy Sacrament, ſhould be celebrated in one place only, and conſecrated by one only Prieſt in the world, with how great deſire doſt thou thinke, would men be affected to that place, and what eſteeme would they haue of ſuch a Prieſt of Almighty God, by whom

they myght enioy the consolation of these diuine mysteries? but now there are many Priests, and Christ is offered vp in many places, that so the grace and loue of God to man, may appeare so much the greater, how much the more this sacred Communion is common through the worlde. Thanks be vnto thee, good Iesu, euerlasting Pastour of our soules, that hast vouchsafed to refresh vs poore & banished men, with thy precious Body and Bloud, and to inuite vs to receauing of these mysteries with the wordes of thy owne mouth, sayinge: Come vnto me all yee that labour and are burdened, and I wil refresh you.

That the great goodneſſe and charity of God is beſtowed vpon man in this Sacrament.

The voice of the Diſciple.

CHAP. II.

PReſuming of thy goodneſſe and great mercy, ô Lord, being ſike, I approach vnto my Sauiour, hungry and thirſty to the fountaine of life, needy to the Kinge of heauen, a ſeruant vnto my Lord, a creature to my Creator, deſolate to my merciſull comforter. But whence is this to me, that thou vouchſafeſt to come vnto me? Who am I that thou ſhouldeſt giue thy ſelf vnto me? How dare a ſinner preſume to appeare before thee?

And thou, how doſt thou vouchſafe to come vnto a ſinner? Thou knoweſt thy ſeruant, and ſeeſt that he hath no good thinge in him, for which thou shouldeſt beſtow this benefit vpon him. I confeſſe therfore my vnworthineſſe, and I acknowledge thy goodneſſe: I praiſe thy mercy, & giue thee thanks for this thy vnſpeakable charity. For thou doeſt this for thine owne goodneſſe, not for any merits of mine, to the end that thy goodneſſe may be better knowne vnto me, thy charity more aboundantly shewen, and thy humility more highlie commended. Since therfore it is thy pleaſure, and haſt commanded that it should be ſo, this thy bounty is alſo pleaſinge to me, and I wish that my offences may be no hinderance.

2. O most sweet and bountifull Iesu, how great reuerence & thanks, with perpetuall praise is due vnto thee for the receauing of thy sacred body, whose worth & dignity no man is able to expresse! But what shal I thinke of at this time, now that I am to receaue this diuine Sacament, and to approach vnto my Lord, to whom I am not able to giue due reuerence, and yet I desire to receaue him deuoutly? What can I thinke better & more profitable, then to humble my selfe wholy before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodnesse aboue me? I praise thee my God, and wil exalt thee for euer, and I doe despise, and submit my self vnto thee, euen vnto the depth of my vnworthinesse.

3. Behold thou art the Holy

of Holies, and I the skum of sinners! behold thou boweſt thy ſelfe downe vnto me, who am not worthy ſo much as to looke vp vnto thee! Behold thou commeſt vnto me: it is thy will to be with me, thou inuiteſt me to thy banquet. Thou wilt giue me the food of heauen, & bread of Angels to eate, which is no other truely then thy ſelfe, the liuely bread, that deſcendeſt from heauen, aud giueſt life vnto the world.

4. Behold from whence this loue proceedeth! what kinde of fauour and benignity is this which shineth vpon vs! What thankes and praiſes are due vnto thee for theſe benefits! O how good & profitable was thy counſel when thou ordainedſt it! How ſweet and pleaſant the banquet,

when thou gaueſt thy ſelfe to be our food! How wonderfull thy worke, ô Lord, how powerfull thy vertue, how vnſpeakable thy truth! For thou ſaidſt the word, and all thinges were made; and this was done which thou commandeſt.

5. A thinge of great admiration, and worthy of faith, and ſurpaſſing the vnderſtanding of man, that thou, my Lord God, true God and Man, shouldeſt be wholy conteyned vnder a ſmall forme of bread and wine, and shouldeſt be eaten by the receauer without being conſumed. Thou who art the Lord of all thinges, and ſtandeſt in neede of none, haſt pleaſed to dwell in vs by meanes of this thy Sacrament: preſerue my heart and body vnſpotted, that with a cheerful and

pure conſcience, I may often celebrate thy myſteries, & receaue them to my euerlaſting health, which thou haſt chiefly ordained & inſtituted for thy honour, and perpetuall memory.

6. Reioyce my ſoule, and giue thanks vnto God for ſo noble a gift, and ſingular comfort left vnto thee in this vale of teares, For as often as thou calleſt to mind this myſtery, and receaueſt the body of Chriſt: ſo often doſt thou worke the work of thy redemption, and art made partaker of al the merits of Chriſt. For the charity of Chriſt is neuer diminished, and the greatneſſe of his mercy is neuer leſſened. Therefore thou oughteſt alwaies to diſpoſe thy ſelfe herunto by a fresh renewing of thy mind, and to weigh with attentiue conſi-

deration this great miſtery of thy ſaluation. So great, new, & ioyfull it ought to ſeeme vnto thee, whē thou ſayeſt, or heareſt Maſſe, as if the ſame day Chriſt firſt deſcending into the wombe of the Virgin, were become man, or hanging on the croſſe, did ſuffer and dy for the ſaluation of mankinde.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

CHAPT. III.

BEhold, O Lord, I come vnto thee, that I may be comforted in thy gift, and be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O Lord, haſt prepared in thy ſweetneſſe, for the poore. Behold in thee is al whatſoeuer

I can, or ought to desire: thou art my health, and my redemption, my hope, and my strength, my honour, and my glory. Make ioyfull therefore this day the soule of thy seruant, for that I haue lifted it vp to thee my sweete Iesus, I desire to receaue thee now with deuotion, and reuerence, I doe long to bringe thee into my house, that with Zacchæus I may deserue to be blessed by thee, and numbred amongst the children of Abraham. My soule thirsteth to receaue thy body, my hart desireth to be vnited with thee.

2. Giue thy selfe to me, and it sufficeth. For besides thee no comfort is auailable. I cannot be without thee, nor liue without thy visitation. And therefore I must often come vnto thee, and

receaue thee as the only remedie of my health, leaſt perhaps I faint in the way, if I be depriued of thy heauenly food. For ſo, moſt mercifull Ieſus, thou once didſt ſay, preaching to the people, and curing ſundry diſeaſes: I will not ſend them home faſtinge, leaſt they faint in the way Deale thou therfore in like manner now with me, who haſt vouchſafed to leaue thy ſelfe in the Sacrament for the comfort of the faithfull. For thou art the ſweet refection of the ſoule and he that eateth thee worthily, ſhall be partaker, and heire of euerlaſting glory. It is neceſſary for me, that doe ſo often fall & ſinne, ſo quickly wax dull and faint, that by often prayers and confeſſion, and receauing of thy ſacred body, I renew, cleanſe, &

inflame my selfe, least perhapps by long abstayning. I fall from my holy purpose.

3 For man is prone vnto euill from his youth, and vnlesse this diuine remedy helpe him, he quickly slideth to worse. This holy Communion therfore draweth backe from euill, and comforteth in good. For if I be now so often slacke, and negligent when I communicate, or say Masse, what would become of me, if I receaued not this remedie, & sought not after so great a helpe? Though euery day I be not fit, nor well prepared to say Masse, I wil endeauour notwithstanding at conuenient times to receaue the diuine misteries, and make my self partaker of so great a grace. For this is the only chief comforte of a faithfull soule,

whilſt she wandereth from thee in this mortall body, that being mindfull of her God, she often receaue her Beloued with a deuout minde.

4. O wonderfull benignity of thy mercy towards vs, that thou, Lord God, the Creatour and giuer of life to all ſpirits, dooſt vouchſafe to come vnto a poore ſoule, and with thy Godhead & Humanity to replenish her hunger. O happy mind and bleſſed ſoule, that deſerueth to receaue, her Lord God, with deuout affection; and in receauing of thee to be filled with ſpirituall ioy! O how great a Lord doth she entertaine! How beloued a gueſt doth she harbour! how pleaſant a companion doth she receaue! how faithfull a friend doth she accept! how beautifull and no-

ble a ſpouſe doth she imbrace! she imbraceth him who is to be loued aboue all that is beloued, and aboue all things that may be defired. Let heauen and earth and all their beauty, be ſilent in thy preſence. For what beauty and praiſe ſoeuer they haue, it is receaued from thy bountie, and shall not equal the beautie of thy name, of whoſe wiſedome there is no end.

That many benefits are beſtowed vpon them that communicate deuoutly.

The voyce of the Diſciple.

CHAPT. IV.

MY Lord God, preuent thy ſeruant in the bleſſings

of thy ſweetnes, that I may deſerue to approach worthily and deuoutly to thy holy Sacrament: ſtirre vp my hart vnto thee, and deliuer me from all heauines & ſlouth: viſit me with thy comfort: that I may taſt in ſpirit thy ſweetneſſe, which plentifully lyeth hid in this Sacrament, as a fountaine. Giue light alſo to my eyes, to behold ſo great a myſtery, & ſtrengthen me to beleeue it with vndoubted faith. For it is thy worke, and not mans power, thy ſacred inſtitution, not mans inuention. For noe man is of himſelfe able to conprehende and vnderſtand theſe thinges, which ſurpaſſe the vnderſtanding euen of Angels. What therfore ſhall I vnworthy ſinner, earth and ashes, beable to ſearch and comprehend of ſo high

high and sacred a mystery?

2. O Lord in sincerity of hart, with a good and firme faith, & at thy commandement, I come vnto thee with hope and reuerence, & doe verily beleeue, that thou art heere present in the Sacrament, God and Man. Thy holy pleasure is, that I receaue thee, and by charity doe vnite my selfe vnto thee. Wherfore I doe recurre vnto thy clemency, and doe craue speciall grace, that I may wholy melt in thee, and abound with loue, and herafter neuer admit any externall comfort. For this most high & worthy Sacrament, is the health of the soule and body, the remedy of all spirituall sicknes: by it my vices are cured, my passions bridled, temptations ouercome or weakened, greater grace infu-

sed, vertue increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and charity inflamed and enlarged.

3. For thou hast bestowed, & still oftentimes doest bestow, many benefits in this Sacrament vpon thy beloued that receaue deuoutly, my God the Protectour of my soule, the strengthenner of humaine frailty, and the giuer of al inward comfort. Thou impartest vnto them much comfort against sundry tribulations, and liftest them vp from the depth of their owne baseness, to the hope of thy protection, and doest inwardly refresh and illustrate them with a certaine new grace, in such sort, that they who before Communion felt themselues heauy and indisposed: afterwards being strengthened with heauenly meate and drinke,

doe finde in themselues a great change to the better. Which thou doest so dispose to thy elect, that they may truly acknowledg & patiently proue, how great their owne infirmity is, and what benefit and grace they receaue from thee. For they of themselues are cold, dul and indeuout; but by thee they are made feruent, agile, and full of deuotion. For who is there, that approching humbly vnto the Fountaine of sweetnesse, doth not carry away from thence at least some little sweetnesse? Or who standing by a great fire, receaueth not some small heate therby? Thou art a fountaine alwaies full & ouerflowing, a fire euer burning & neuer decaying.

4. Wherfore if cannot draw at the full I out of this fountaine,

nor drinke my fill, I will notwithstanding set my lips to the mouth of this heauenly conduit, that I may draw from thence, at least some small drop to refresh my thirst, to the end I wither not wholy away and perish. And though I be not altogether celestial, nor so inflamed as the Cherubins & Seraphins, notwithstanding I will endeauour to apply my selfe to deuotion, and dispose my hart to obtaine some small sparke of diuine fire, by humble receauing of this life - giueing Sacramente. And whatsoeuer is hereunto wanting in me, good Iesu, most blessed Sauiour, doe thou supply for me, most benigne and gracious Lord, who hast vouchsafed to call vs vnto thee, saying, Come vnto me al yee that labour & are

burdened, & I wil refresh you.

5. I labour in the ſweate of my browes, I am vexed with griefe of hart, I am burdened with ſinns, I am troubled with temptations, I am intangled and oppreſſed with many euill paſſions, and there is none to help me, none to deliuer and ſaue me, but thou, Lord God, my Sauiour, to whom I commit my ſelfe, & all mine, that thou maiſt keep me, and bring me to life euerlaſting. Receaue me to the honour and glory of thy name, who haſt prepared thy Body and Bloud to be my meate and my drinke. Graunt, Lord God, my Sauiour, that by frequenting thy myſteries, my zeale and deuotion may increaſe.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Of the dignitie of this Sacrament, and Prieſtly function.

The voice of the Diſciple.

CHAPT. V.

IF thou hadſt angelical purity, and the ſanctity of S. Iohn Baptiſt, thou wert not worthie to receaue, nor handle this Sacrament. For it is not within the compaſſe of the deſerts of men that man ſhould conſecrate and handle the Sacrament of Chriſt, and receaue for food the bread of Angels. A great myſtery, and great is the dignity of Prieſts, to whom is graunted that, which is not permitted to the Angels, For Prieſts only inſtituted in the Church, haue power to celebrate, and conſecrate the body of Chriſt. The Prieſt is the Miniſter of God, vſing

the wordes of God, by Gods commandement, and appointment; but God is there the principall actour, and inuisible worker, to whom is subiect all that he pleaseth, and all that he commandeth, doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to giue more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacrament, then to thine owne sense, or to any visible signe. And therfore thou art to come vnto this Mystery, with feare and reuerence. Considere attentiuelie with thy selfe, what that is, whrerof the Ministry is deliuered vnto thee by the imposition of hands of the Bishop. Behold thou art made a Priest, & consecrated to say Masse, see now that in due time thou offer Sacrifice vnto God faithfully & deuout-

ly, and carry thy ſelfe ſo, as thou maiſt be without reproofe. Thou haſt not lightned thy burthen, but art now bound with a ſtraiter band or diſcipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of ſanctity. A Prieſt ought to be adorned with all kind of vertue, and to giue example of good life to others. His conuerſation should not be according to the ordinary and common proceedings of men, but like to the Angels in heauen, or to perfect men on earth.

3. A Prieſt clothed in ſacred garments, is the Vicegerent of Chriſt, to pray humbly, & with a proſtrate minde vnto God for himſelfe and the whole people. He hath before and behind the ſigne of the Croſſe of our Lord, to the end he may euer remember the Paſſion of Chriſt: he bea-

reth the Crosse before him in the Vestement, that he may diligently beholde the footsteps of our sauiour Christ, and fernently endeauour to follow them. He is behinde marked with the crosse, that he may patiently suffer for God, whatsoeuer aduersitie shall be layd vpon him by others. He beareth the crosse before, that he may lament his owne sinnes: and the same he hath also behind, that he may with a compassionate harte, bewaile the offences of others, and know that he is placed as a mediatour betweene God, and the sinner. Neither ought he to cease from praier & holy oblation, till he deserue to obtaine grace and mercy. When a Priest doth celebrate, he honoureth God, reioyceth the Angels, edifieth the Church, hel-

peth the liuing, giueth rest to the dead, and maketh himselfe partaker of all good deeds.

An Interrogation of the exercise before Communion.

The voyce of the Disciple.

CHAP. VI.

When I weigh thy greatnes, O Lord, and my vnworthinesse, I tremble, and am confounded in my selfe. For if I come not vnto thee, I fly from life; and if I vnworthyly intrude my selfe, I incurre thy displeasure. What therfore shal I doe my God, my helper, and my counsellour in necessity?

2. Teach me the right way, appoint me some brief exercise, sutable to this holy mystery of sacred Communion. For it is good for me to know, how I

should reuerently and deuoutly prepare my hart vnto thee, for the profitable receauing of thy Sacrament, or for the celebrating of so great & diuine a Sacrifice.

Of the discussing of our owne conscience, with purpose of amendment.

The voyce of the Beloued.

CHAP. VII.

ABoue all things, the Priest of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, & receaue this Sacrament, with great humility of harte, and lowly reuerence, with a full faith, and a Godly desire of the honour of the diuine Maiesty. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy

power, purge and cleanſe it with true contrition, and humble confeſſion: ſo as there may be nothing in thee, that may be burdenſome vnto thee, or that may breed in thee remorſe of conſcience, & hinder thy free acceſſe to theſe heauenly myſteries. Repent thee of all thy ſinnes in generall, and in particuler bewaile thy daily offences. And if thou haſt time, confeſſe vnto God in the ſecret of thy harte, all the myſeries of thy diſordered paſſions.

2. Lament and greeue, that thou art yet ſo ſubiect to ſenſuality, & ſo addicted to the world, ſo vnmortified in thy paſſions, ſo ful of the motions of concupiſcence, ſo vnwatchful ouer thy outward ſenſes, ſo often intangled with many vaine fantaſies, ſo ve-

hemently inclined to outward things, so negligent in the interiour, so prone to laughter and immodesty, so hard to teares & compunction, so prompt to ease & pleasures of the flesh, so dull to austerity & feruour, so curious to heare newes & see vaine sights, so slack to imbrace that which tends to thine owne humiliation and contempt, so couetous of aboundance, so niggardly in giuing, so fast in keeping, so inconsiderat in speach, so vnbridled to silence, so loose in manners, so outragious in deedes, so greedy at meate, so deafe to the word of God, so hasty to rest, so slow to labour, so watchfull to tales, so drowsy to watch in the seruice of God, so hasty to the end thereof, so inconstant in attention, soe neglectfull in

ſaying thy office, ſo vndeuout in ſayinge Maſſe, ſo dry in receauing, ſo quickly diſtracted, ſo ſeldome wholy recollected, ſo ſuddainly moued to anger, ſo apt to take diſpleaſure againſt another, ſo prone to iudge, ſo ſeuere to reprehend, ſo ioyfull in proſperity, ſo weake in aduerſitie, ſo often purpoſinge much good, and performinge little.

3. Theſe and other thy defects confeſſed, and bewailed with ſorrow, & great diſlike of thine owne infirmitie, make a firme purpoſe alwaies to amend thy ſelfe, and to goe forwardes in vertue. Then with full reſignation, and with thy whole will, offer thy ſelfe vp to the honour of my name, a perpetuall ſacrifice on the altar of thy hart, faith-

fully committing thy body and ſoule vnto me, that thou maiſt ſo alſo deſerue to come worthily to offer ſacrifice vnto God, and to receaue profitably the Sacrament of my body.

4. For there is no oblation more worthy, nor ſatisfaction greater, for the waſhing away of ſinnes, then to offer vp our ſelues vnto God purely & wholy with the oblation of the Body of Chriſt in the Maſſe, and in Communion. And when a man ſhall haue done what lieth in him, and ſhall be truly penitent, as I liue, ſaith our Lord, who will not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he be conuerted and liue, I will not remember his ſinns any more, but they ſhal be all forgiuen him, and fully pardoned.

Of the oblation of Christ on the Crosse, and resignation of our selues.

[The voyce of the beloued.

CHAP. VIII.

AS I willingly offered vp my selfe vnto God my Father, with my hands stretched forth on the Crosse, and my body naked for thy sinnes, so that nothing remained in me that was not turned into a sacrifice, for the appeasing of the diuine wrath: so oughtest thou also to offer vp thy selfe willingly vnto me daily in the Masse, as a pure and holy oblation, with thy whole force, & desir, in as harty a manner as thou canst. What doe

doe I require of thee more, then that thou resigne thy selfe wholy vnto me? Whatsoeuer thou giuest besides thy selfe, is of little accompt in my sight, for I seek not thy gift, but thee.

2. As it would not suffice thee to haue all things whatsoeuer besides me; so nether can it please me whatsoeuer thou giuest, if thou offerest not vp thy selfe. Offer thy selfe vnto me, & giue thy selfe, & al that thou art, for God, and thy offering shall be gratefull. Behold I offered vp my selfe wholy vnto my Father for thee, & gaue my whole body, and bloud, for thy food, that I might be wholy thine, & thou remaine mine. But if thou abidest in thy selfe, and doest not offer thy selfe vp freely vnto my wil, thy oblation is not en-

tire, neither shall the vnion betweene vs be perfect. Therfore a free offering vp of thy selfe into the handes of God, ought to goe before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtaine freedome and grace. For this cause so few become inwardly illuminated, and enioy true liberty of harte, for that they doe not resolue wholy to deny themselues. My saying is vndoubtedly true. Vnlesse one forsake all, he cannot be my disciple. If thou therfore wish to be mine, offer vp thy selfe vnto me with thy whole desires.

That we ought to offer vp ourselues and all that is ours vnto God, and to pray for all.

The voice of the Disciple.

CHAP. IX.

THine, O Lord, are all thinges that are in heauen and in earth. I desire to offer vp my self vnto thee, as a free oblation, and to remaine awaies thine. O Lord, in sincerity of my hart, I offer my self vnto thee this day, in sacrifice of perpetuall praise, to be thy seruant for euer. Receaue me with this holy oblation of thy precious body, which, in the presence of the Angells inuisibly attending here vpon thee, I offer into thee, that it may be to the health of my soule, and the saluation of all thy people.

2. I offer vnto thee, O Lord, all my ſinnes & offences, which I haue committed in the ſight of thee, and thy holy Angels from the day wherin I firſt could ſinne, to this houre, vpon thy holy altar: that thou maiſt conſume and burne them all with the fire of thy charity, and waſh out all the ſtaines of my ſinnes, and cleanſe my conſcience from all offence, and reſtore to me againe thy grace, which I loſt by ſinne, forgiuing me al my offences, and receauing me mercifully in the kiſſe of peace.

3. What can I doe for my ſinns, but humbly confeſſe and bewaile them, and intreat alwaies for mercy whithout intermiſſion? I beſeech thee, heare me in thy aboundant mercy, whē I ſtand before thee my God. All

my sinnes are very displeasing vnto me. I will neuer commit them any more, but I am sory and will be sory for them as long as I liue, and am ready to doe pennance, & to satisfy for them to the vttermost of my power, Forgiue me, o God, forgiue me my sinnes, for thy holy names sake: saue my soule, which thou hast redeemed with thy precious Bloud. Behold I commit my self vnto thy mercy, I resigne my selfe ouer into thy hands. Doe with me according to thy goodnesse, not according to my wickednes, & manifold iniquity.

4. I offer vp also vnto thee all whatsoeuer is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou maist amend and sanctify it, that thou maist make it grateful and acceptable

vnto thee, and alwaies perfect more and more that which thou haſt begun, and bring me alſo, who am thy slouthful and vnprofitable creature, to a good & bleſſed end.

5. I offer vp alſo vnto thee all the Godly deſires of deuout perſons, the neceſſities of my parents & friends, my brethen & ſiſters, & of al thoſe that are deare vnto me, & that haue done good either to my ſelfe or others for thy loue, & that haue deſired me to ſay Maſſe & pray for them & all others, whether they be yet aliue, or already dead: that they al may receaue the help of thy grace & comfort, protection frō dāgers, deliuery frō paine, & being freed from al euils, may ioyfully giue worthy thankes to thee.

6. I offer vp alſo vnto thee my

prayers, and sacrifices, especiallie for them who haue in any thing wronged, grieued, or slaundered me, or haue done me any domage or displeasure, and for those also, whom I haue at any time grieued, troubled, and scandalized by words, or deeds, wittingly, or at vnawares: that it may please thee to forgiue vs all our sinnes and offences, one against the other. Take, O Lord, from our harts all iealousy, all indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoeuer may hurt Charity, and weaken brotherly loue. Haue mercy, O Lord, haue mercy on those, that craue thy mercy: giue grace vnto them that stand in need thereof, and graunt that we may be worthy to enioy thy grace, and attaine to life euerlasting. Amen.

That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborne.

The voyce of the Beloued.

CHAPT. X.

THou oughteſt often to haue recourſe to the Fountaine of grace, and of diuine mercie, to the Fountaine of goodneſſe, and of all piety, that thou maiſt be cured of thy ſinnes and paſſions; and deſerue to be made more ſtrong and vigilant againſt all temptations and deceipts of the Diuell: The enemy knowing the greateſt profit, and remedy to conſiſt in the holy Communion, endeauoureth by all meanes and occaſions to withdraw and hinder faithfull and deuout perſons from it.

2. Some when they purpose to receaue the sacred communion suffer greatest assaults of the Diuell. For that wicked spirit (as is written in Iob) commeth amongst the sonnes of God, to trouble them with his accustomed malice & impiety, or to make them ouer fearfull & perplexed, that so he may diminish their affection, or by subtile assaultes, take away their faith, to the end they may either altogether abstaine from this diuine food, or at least come vnto it with lesse deuotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his fraudes & malicious suggestions, be they neuer so filthy & hideous, but all is to be turned back vpon his owne head. We ought to contemne and scorne him miserable wretch, & not to omit the sacred communion for

his assaults, and the troubles which he raiseth.

3. Oftentimes also an excessiue care for the obtaining of deuotion, & a certaine anxiety for the making of our Confession hindreth vs. Follow in these occasions the counsell of the wise, and put away all anxiety & scruple, for it hindreth the grace of God, & ouerthroweth deuotiõ. Omit not for euery small vexation of the mind which happeneth, to receaue this holy Sacrament, but go, presently to confession, and willingly forgiue others, whatsoeuer offences they haue done against thee: and if thou hast offended any, humbly craue pardon, and God wil willingly forgiue thee.

4. What auaileth it to delay confession, and to deferr recea-

uing? Purge thy ſelf with ſpeed, ſpit out the venome preſently, make haſt to take a remedy, and thou ſhalt find it better, then if thou deferredſt it long. If thou omitteſt it to day for this cauſe, perhaps to morrow ſome greater will fall out, & ſo thou maiſt be hindered a long time from theſe diuine myſteries, and become more vnfit. Stirre vp thy ſelfe, and shake off all heauineſſe and ſlouth, with the greatneſt force and ſpeed thou canſt. For it profiteth nothing to continue long in diſquietnes and trouble of mind, and for daily occurring impediments, to withdraw thy ſelfe from the Sacraments. Yea it hurteth very much to defer Communion long, for it is wont to breed a great and dangerous dulneſſe. Alas, ſome cold and diſ-

ſolute people, do willingly delay their confeſſion, & doe therfore defer the ſacred Communiõ, leaſt they ſhould be bound to greater watch ouer themſelues.

5. O how little charity and weake deuotion haue they that ſo eaſily omit the receauing of theſe holy myſteries! how happie is he and gratefull to God, who ordereth ſo his life, & keepeth his conſcience in ſuch puritie, that he may be ready and fit to communicate euery day, if it were conuenient and might be done without notice! If any ſometimes abſtaine of humility, or by reaſon of ſome lawful impediment, he is to be commended for the reuerence which therin he sheweth. But if it proceedeth of coldneſſe, he muſt ſtir himſelf vp, and doe what lieth in him, &

God will prosper his desire, for the goodwill he hath to doe it, which God doth chiefly respect.

6. And when any lawfull hindrance doth happen, he must alwaies haue yet a goodwill and louinge desire to communicate, and so shall he not loose the fruit of the Sacrament. For a deuout person may euery day and houre profitably and without lett, receaue Christ spiritually: and yet on certaine daies, & at times appointed he ought to receaue Sacramētally with a reuerēd desire, the body of his Redeemer, and rather seek the honour and glory of God, then his owne comfort. For he communicateth mystically, and is inuisibly fed, as often as he deuoutly calleth to mind the mystery of the Incarnation, & the Passion of Christ, & is inflamed

with his loue.

7. He that prepareth not himselfe, but when feastes drawe neere, and when custome compelleth him therunto, shall often be vnprepared. Blessed is he that offereth himselfe vp as an Holocaust and burnt offering to our Lord, as oftē as he doth celebrate or communicate. Be not too long nor to short, in saying Masse, but keep the acustomed manner of those with whom thou liuest. Thou oughtest not to be tedious & troublesome to others, but to obserue the common course, according to the appointment of thy Superiours: and rather frame thy selfe to the profit of others, then to thine owne deuotion or desire.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scripture, are most necessarie vnto a faithfull soule.

The voyce of the Disciple.

CHAP. XI.

O Most sweet Lord Iesu, how great is the delight of a deuout soule that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is no other meate offered to be eaten, but thy self her only beloued, and most to be desired aboue all the desires of her hart. And verily it would be a great comfort vnto me, to powre out teares from the bottome of my hart in thy presence, & with deuout Magdalen to wash thy feet with the teares of mine eyes. But where is this

deuotion? Where is so plentifull shedding of holy teares? Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy Angels, my whole hart should be inflamed and dissolue into teares for ioy. For I enioy thee in the Sacrament reallie presēt, although hidden vnder another forme.

2. For to behold thee in thine owne diuine brightnesse, mine eyes would not be able to to endure it, nether could the whole world stand in the clearnesse of the glory of thy Maiesty. Thou therfore prouidest for my weaknesse, in that thou coueresst thy selfe vnder the Sacrament. I doe really enioy and adore him, whom the Angels adore in heauen, but I, as yet for the time, in faith, they in his proper forme, and without shaddow. I ought to be

to be contented with the light of true faith, & to walke therin, vntill the day of euerlasting brightneſſe breake forth, and the shadowes of figures paſſe away. But then that shall come which is perfect, the vſe of Sacraments shal ceaſe. For the bleſſed in heauenly glory, need not the remedy of Sacraments, who reioyce without end in the preſence of God, beholding his glory face to face, and being transformed by his brightneſſe into the brightneſſe of the incomprehenſible Deity, they taſt the word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, & as he remaineth for euer.

3. Whilſt I remember theſe thy wonderfull workes, all ſpirituall comfort whatſoeuer becometh very tedious vnto me: for that as long as I behold not my

Lord openly in his glory, I make no accompt of whatsoeuer I see or heare in this life. Thou art my witnes, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature giue me rest, but thou my God, whom I desire to behold euerlastingly. But this is not possible, whilst I remaine in this mortall life. Therfore I must frame my selfe to much patience, & submit my selfe to thee in all my desires. For thy Saints also, O Lord, who now reioyce with thee in the Kingdome of heauen, whilest they liued, expected in faith and great patience, the comming of thy glory. What they beleeued, I beleeue; what they hoped for, I expect; wither they are come, I trust I shall come by thy grace. In the meane time I will be forward in faith, strengthened by

the examples of the Saints. I haue also deuout bookes for my comfort, & for the guide of my life, & aboue all these, thy most holy Body for a singular remedy and refuge.

4. For I perceaue two things to be chiefly necessary for me in this life, without which this miserable life would be insupportable vnto me. Whilst I am kept in the prison of this body, I acknowledge my selfe to stand in need of two things, to wit, food and light. Thou hast therfore giuen vnto me (weake creature) thy sacred Body for the refection of my soule and body, & hast set thy word as a light vnto my feet; without these two I could not well liue. For the word of God, is the light of the soule; and thy Sacrament, the bread of life.

These also may be called, the two tables set on the one side & the other, in the store house of the holy Church. One is the table of the holy Altar, conteyning the sacred bread, that is, the precious body of Christ: the other is of the diuine law, conteyning holy doctrin, teaching true faith, & certainely leading to the part of the Temple within the veye, where are the Holy of Holies. Thanks be vnto thee. Lord Iesus, light of euerlasting light, for thy table of holy doctrine, at which thou seruest vs by thy seruants the Prophets and Apostles, and other Doctours.

5. Thanks be vnto thee Creatour and Redeemer of man, who to manifest thy charity to the whole world hast prepared a greate supper, wherin thou

haſt offered to be eaten, not the myſtical lambe, but thine owne moſt ſacred Body and Bloud, reioycing all the faithfull with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them to the full with thy heauenly Cuppe, in which are all the delights of heauen, and the holy Angels doe feaſt with vs, but with a more happy ſweetneſſe.

6. O how great and honourable is the office of Prieſts, to whom it is graunted with ſacred words to conſecrat the Lord of Maieſty, with their lips to bleſſe him, with their hands to hold him, with their owne mouth to receaue him, and to adminiſter him to others! O how cleane ought thoſe hands to be! How pure that mouth! How holy the body! How vnſported the hart

of the Prieſts, in whom the Authour of purity ſo often entreth! Nothing but holy, no word but chaſt and profitable, ought to proceed from the mouth of the Prieſt, which ſo often receaueth the Sacrament of Chriſt.

7. Simple and chaſt ought to be the eyes, that are wont to behold the body of Chriſt, the hands pure and lifted vp to heauen, that vſe to handle the Creatour of heauen and earth. Vnto the Prieſts eſpecially it is ſaid in the Law: Be yee holy, for that I your Lord God am holy.

8. Aſſiſt vs (Almighty God) with thy grace, that we, who haue vndertaken the office of Prieſthood, may ſerue thee worthily and deuoutly in all purity, and with a ſincere conſcience. And if we cannot liue in ſo great

innocency as we ought to doe, graunt vs notwithstanding, in due manner to bewaile the sinnes which we haue committed, and in the spirit of humility, and sincere inuention, to serue thee hereafter with more feruour.

That he that is to communicate ought to prepare himselfe with great diligence.

The voyce of the Beloued.

CHAP. XII.

I Am the louer of purity, and the giuer of al sanctity, I seek a pure hart, and there is the place of my rest. Make ready and adorne for me a great chamber and I wil make with thee the Pascha with my Disciples. If thou

vilt haue me come vnto thee, and remaine with thee, purge the old leauen, and make cleane the dwelling of thy hart: shut out the whole world, and all tumult of vices: ſit like a ſparrow ſolitary vpon the houſe top, and thinke of thy offences in the bitterneſſe of thy ſoule. For euery louer, prepareth the beſt and faireſt roome for his beloued, and herein is knowne the affection of him that intertaineth his beloued.

2. Know thou notwithſtanding, that the worth of no action of thine, is able to make this preparation ſufficient, although thou ſhouldeſt prepare thy ſelfe a whole yeare together, and thinke on nothing elſe, but of my mercy and Grace only: thou art ſuffered to come to my table

like a beggar inuited to dinner to a rich man, who hath nothing else to returne him for his benefits, but to humble himselfe, & giue him thanks. Doe what lieth in thee, and do it diligently, not for custome, nor for necessitie, but with feare and reuerence, & harty affection receaue the body of thy beloued Lord & God, who vouchsafeth to come vnto thee. I am he that haue called thee, I haue commanded it to be done, I will supply what is wanting in thee, come and receaue me.

3. When I bestow the grace of deuotion on thee, giue thankes to God, for it giuen thee, not for that thou deseruest it, but because I haue mercy on thee. If thou haue it not, but rather feele thy selfe dry continue-

in prayer, ſigh and knock, and giue not ouer vntil thou deſerue to receaue ſome crumme or drop of grace. Thou haſt need of me, not I of thee, nether comeſt thou to ſanctify me, but I come to ſanctify and make thee better. Thou comeſt that thou maiſt be ſanctified by me, and vnited vnto me, that thou maiſt receaue new grace, and be ſtirred vp againe to amendment. Neglect not this grace, but prepare thy hart with all diligence, and receaue thy beloued into thy ſoule.

4. But thou oughteſt not only to prepare thy ſelfe to deuotion before Communion, but carefully alſo to conſerue thy ſelfe therin, after thou haſt receaued the Sacrament. Nether is the carefull guard of thy ſelfe after, leſſe exacted, then deuout pre-

paration before. For a good guard afterwards, is the best preparation thou canst make for the obtaining againe of greater grace, because that mans mind becometh very indisposed, if he presently powre himselfe out to outward comforts. Beware of much talke, remaine in some secret place, and enioy thy God. For thou hast him, whom all the world cannot take from thee. I am he, to whom thou oughtest wholy to giue thy selfe, that so thou maist liue herafter, not in thy selfe, but in me, without all care.

That a deuout ſoule ought to deſire with her whole hart, to be vnited vnto Chriſt in the B. Sacrament.

The voyce of the Diſciple.

CHAPT. XIII.

HOw may I obtaine this, ô Lord, that I may find thee alone, and open my whole hart vnto thee, and enioy thee as my ſoule deſireth? And that no man may look vpon me, nor any creature moue me or reſpect me, but thou alone maiſt ſpeake vnto me, and I to thee, as the beloued, is wont to ſpeak to his beloued, and a friend to banquet with his friend? This I pray for, this I deſire, that I may be wholy vnited

vnto thee, and may withdraw my hart from all created things, and more and more, by sacred Communion and often celebrating, learne to tast of heauenly & euerlasting sweetnes. O Lord God, when shal I be wholy vnited and absorpt by thee, and altogether forgetfull of my selfe! thou in me, and I in thee, and so graunt vs both to continue in one.

2. Thou art my beloued, the choicest amongst thousands, in whom my soule hath taken pleasure to dwel all the dayes of her life. Thou art my peace-maker in whom is greatest peace, and true rest, without whom is labour and sorrow, and infinite misery. Thou art a hidden God, and thy counsell is not with the wicked, but thy speach is with

the humble and ſimple of hart. O Lord, how ſweet is thy ſpirit, who, to the end thou mighteſt shew thy ſweetnes towards thy children vouchſafeſt to feed them with the moſt delightſome bread which deſcendeth from heauen, and is full of all ſweetnes. Surely there is no other Nation ſo great, that hath Gods approaching vnto them, as thou our God art preſent to all thy faithfull, vnto whō for their daily comfort, and for the lifting vp of their harts to heauen, thou giueſt thy ſelfe to be eaten and enioyed.

3. For what other nation is there ſo famous, as the Chriſtian people? or what creature vnder heauen ſo beloued, as a deuout ſoule, to whom God himſelfe commeth to feed her with his glorious flesh? O vnſpeakable

grace! O admirable fauour! O infinite loue singularly bestowed vpon man! But what shall I giue vnto our Lord in returne of this grace, for so singular a charity There is no other thing more gratefull that I am able to giue, then to bestow my hart wholy on my God, and to vnite it perfectly vnto him. Then shall all my bowells reioyce, when my soule shall be perfectly vnited vnto God. Then he wil say vnto me: if thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I wil answeare him. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remaine with me, and I wil be with thee. This is my whole desire, that my hart be vnited vnto thee.

Of the feruent desire of some deuout persons, to receaue the Body of Christ.

The voyce of the Disciple.

CHAP. XIV.

O How great is the store of thy sweetnesse, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that feare thee! When I remember some deuout persons who come vnto thy Sacrament, O Lord, with great deuotion and affection, I am oftentimes confounded, and blush within my selfe, that I come so negligently and coldly to thy Altar, to thy table of holy communion: that I remaine so dry, and without spirituall motion or feeling, that I am

I am not wholy inflamed in thy presence, my God, nor so earnestly drawne and moued, as many deuout persons haue bene, who out of a vehement desire of receauing, and a feeling affection of hart, could not containe themselues from weeping, but with the desire both of soule & body, they earnestly longed after thee, O God, the liuely fountaine, being not otherwise able to temper nor satisfy their hunger, but by receauing thy body with all ioy and spirituall greedinesse.

2. O most ardent faith of those persons, a probable argument of thy sacred presence. For these truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose hart burneth so within them, whilst thou, O blessed Iesu, walkest with them. Such desire and

deuotion, ſo vehement loue and feruency, is oftentimes far off from me. Be mercifull vnto me good Ieſu, ſweet & benigne Lord, and graunt me thy poore needy creature, to feele ſometimes at leaſt in this holy Sacrament, a little cordiall deſire of thy loue that my faith may be more ſtrēgthned, my hope in thy goodneſſe increaſed, and that my charity once perfectly inflamed, after the taſting of heauenly Manna, may neuer decay.

3. Thy mercy, O Lord, is able to giue me the grace I deſire, & to viſitt me in thy bounteous clemency with the ſpirit of feruour, when it ſhall pleaſe thee. For although I burne not with ſo great deſirs as thoſe that are ſo eſpecially deuoted vnto thee: yet notwithſtanding by thy grace I deſire

to haue this great inflamed desire, praying and craving that I may participate with all such thy feruent louers, and be nũbred amõg them in their holy company.

That the grace of deuotion is obtayned by humility and denial of our selues.

The voyce of the Beloued.

CHAPT. V.X

THou oughtest to seeke the grace of deuotion instantly, to aske it earnestly, to expect it patiently and confidently, to receaue it ioyfully, to keepe it humbly, to walke with it diligently, and to commit the time and manner of this heauenly visitation to God, vntill it shall be his pleasure to come. Thou ough-

teſt chiefly to humble thy ſelfe, when thou feeleſt inwardly little or no deuotion, and yet not to be too much deiected, nor to grieue inordinately for it. God often giueth in a short moment that, which he hath long time denied: he giueth ſometime in the end that, which in the beginning of prayer he differred to graunt.

2. If grace should be alwaies preſently giuen, and at hand euer with a wish, it could not be wel indured by a weake man. Therfore deuotion is to be expected with good hope, & humble patience: yet impute it to thy ſelf, and thy ſinnes, when it is not giuen thee, or when it is ſecretly taken from thee. It is ſometimes a ſmal matter that hindreth and hideth grace from vs, if it be to be called ſmall, and not rather à

great matter, that hindereth ſo great a good. And if thou remoue this, be it great or ſmall, and perfectly ouercome it, thou shalt haue thy deſire.

3. For preſently as ſoone as thou giueſt thy ſelfe to God, and ſeekeſt not this, nor that, for thine owne pleaſure or will, but ſetleſt thy ſelfe wholy in me. thou shalt find thy ſelfe vnited vnto him, & quiet. For nothing will taſt ſo well, and pleaſe thee ſo much, as the wil and pleaſure of God. Whatſoeuer therfore with a ſincere hart directeth his intention to God, and purgeth himſelfe from all inordinat loue, or diſlike of any creature, shal be moſt fit to receaue grace, and worthy of the gift of deuotion. For our Lord beſtoweth his bleſſings there, where he fin-

deth his veſſels empty. And how much the more perfectly one forſaketh theſe baſeſt things, & dieth to himſelf by contempt of himſelf: ſo much the more ſpeedily grace commeth, and entreth in more plentifully, & lifteſt vp the hart that is free, to a higher ſtate of grace.

4. Then shall he ſee, and abound, and wonder, and his hart shall be enlarged, becauſe the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himſelfe wholy into his hand for euer. Behold ſo shall the man be bleſſed, that ſeeketh Almighty God with his whole hart, and taketh not his ſoule in vaine. This man deſerueth great grace of diuine vnion, in receauing the holy Euchariſt, for that he regardeth not his owne deuotion and comfort, but

aboue al deuotion and comfort, he prizeth the honour & glory of God.

That we ought to manifeſt our neceſsitie vnto Chriſt, and to craue his grace.

The voyce of the Diſciple.

CHAPT. XVI.

O Moſt ſweet and louing Lord, whom I now deſire to receaue deuoutly, thou knoweſt my infirmity, and the neceſſity which I endure, with how many ſinnes I am oppreſſed, how often I am grieued, tempted, troubled & defiled. I come vnto thee for remedy, I craue of thee thy heauenly comfort, and the eaſe of my paine I ſpeake to him that knoweth all thinges,

to whom all my ſecrets are open, and who can only perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knoweſt what it is, wherof aboue all things I ſtand in moſt neede, & how poore I am in vertues.

2. Behold I ſtand before thee, poore and naked, calling for grace, and crauing mercy. Refresh this thy hungry and needy creature, giue heate vnto my coldneſſe, with the fire of thy loue: giue light vnto my blindnes, with the brightneſſe of thy preſence. Turne al earthly things vnto me, into bitterneſſe, all things grieuous and contrary, into patience, all baſe and created things, into contempt and obliuion. Lift vp my hart to thee in heauen, and ſuffer me not to wander vpon earth. Be thou only ſweet and delightſome vnto me

from henceforth for euermore, for thou only art my meate, & my drinke, my loue & my ioy, my delight & all my good.

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholy inflame, burne, and change me into thee, that I might be made one spirit with thee, by the grace of inward vnion and melting of burning loue! Suffer me not to goe from thee hungry and dry, but deale mercifully with me, as thou hast oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What meruaile if I should be wholy inflamed by thee, and dy in my selfe, sith thou art fire burning and neuer decaying, loue purifying the hart, and inlightening the vnderstanding.

Of burning loue, and vehement desire to receaue Christ.

The voyce of the Disciple.

CHAP. XVII.

VVith great deuotion & burning loue, with most harty affection and feruour I desire to receaue thee, O Lord, as many Saints and deuout persons haue desired thee, when they receaued thy Sacrament, who were most pleasing vnto thee in holinesse of life, and most feruent in deuotion. O my God, my euerlasting loue, my whole good, my happinesse without end, I would gladly receaue with the most vehement desire, & worthy reuerence, that any of the Saints euer had, or could feele.

2. And although I be vnworthy to haue all thoſe feelings of deuotion, yet I offer vnto thee the whole affection of my hart. as if I alon had thoſe moſt ſweet inflamed deſires: yea whatſoeuer alſo a deuout mind can conceaue and deſire, all that, with greateſt reuerence, and moſt inward affection I offer & preſent vnto thee, I wish to deſire nothing to my ſelfe, but freely and moſt willingly to ſacrifice my ſelfe and all I haue vnto thee, my Lord God, my Creatour, and my Redeemer. I deſire to receaue thee this day with ſuch affection, reuerence, praiſe and honour, with ſuch gratitude, worthines, and loue, with ſuch faith, hope, and purity, as thy moſt bleſſed Mother the glorious Virgin Marie receaued, and deſired thee.

when she humbly and deuoutly anſwered the Angel, who declared vnto her the myſtery of thy Incarnation, and ſayed: Behold the hand-maid of our Lord, let it be done vnto me according to thy word.

3. And as thy bleſſed Forerunner, the moſt excellent amongſt the Saints Iohn Baptiſt, cherfully leaped with ioy of the holy Ghoſt, whilſt he was yet shut vp in his mothers wombe: & afterwards ſeeing Ieſus walking amongſt men, humbling himſelf very much, ſaid with deuout affection: The friend of the Bridegrom that ſtandeth & heareth him, reioyceth witth ioy for the voyce of the Bridegrome: ſo I alſo wish to be inflamed with great and holy deſires, and to offer my ſelfe vp to thee with my

whole hart. Wherfore I offer alſo, and preſent vnto thee the ioyes, feruent deſires, exceſſes of mind, ſpirituall illuminations, & heauenly viſions of all deuout harts, with all the vertues and praiſes exerciſed, and to be exerciſed, by all creatures in heauen and earth, for my ſelfe, and all ſuch as are commended to me in prayer, that by all thou maiſt be worthily praiſed, & glorified for euer.

4. Receaue, my Lord God, the affections of my hart, and the deſires of infinite praiſe and thākes, which according to the meaſure of thy vnſpeakable greatneſſe, are due vnto thee. Theſe I yeeld thee, and deſire to yeeld thee euery day and moment: and I doe intreat, and inuite all the heauenly ſpirits, & all thy deuout ſer-

uants, to giue thanks and praiſes together with me.

5. Let all People, Tribes, and Tongues praiſe thee, & magnify thy holy and ſweet name with great ioy, and feruent deuotion, and let all that reuerently and deuoutly celebrate thy moſt high Sacrament, & receaue it with full faith, deſerue to find grace, and mercy at thy hand, and pray humbly for me ſinfull creature. And when they ſhall haue obtained their deſired deuotion and ioyfull vnion, & depart from thy ſacred heauenlie table, well comforted and meruailouſly refreshed, let them vouchſafe to remember my poore and needy ſoule.

That man be not a curious ſearcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Chriſt ſubmitting his ſenſe to faith.

The voice of the Diſciple.

CHAP. XVIII.

THou oughteſt to beware of curious and vnprofitable ſearching into this moſt profond Sacrement, if thou wilt not ſink into the depth of doubt. He that is a ſearcher of Maieſty, ſhalbe appreſſed by glory, God is able to work more then man can vnderſtand. A pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, ſo he be alwais ready to be taught, and doe endeauour to walke in the ſound pathes of the ancient Fathers doctrine.

2. Bleſſed is that ſimplicity

that forsaketh the difficulte waies of questions, and goeth on in the plaine and assured path of Gods Commandements. Many haue lost deuotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of vnderstanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not vnderstand, nor cõceaue those things that are vnder thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are aboue thee? Submit thy self to God, & let thy sẽse be subiect to faith, & the light of knowledge shall be giuen thee in that degree as shall be profitable & necessary for thee.

3. Some art grieuously tempted about faith & the Sacrament, but this is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemy. Do not

regarde

regarde nor dispute with thy thoughts, nether doe thou giue answere to the doubts moued by the enemy, but beleeue the words of God, beleue his saints & Prophets, & the wicked Serpent wil fly from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the seruant of God to suffer such things. For he tẽpteth not Infidels & sinners, whõ he already securely possesseth, but he sũdry waies tempreth & vexeth the faithful & deuout.

4. Go forward therfore with a sincere & vndoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with vnfaigned reuerence. And whatsoeuer thou art not able to vnderstand, cõmit securely to Almighty God, God deceaueth thee not: he is deceaued that trusteth too much to himselfe. God walketh with the simple, reuealeth him-

ſelfe to the humble, giueth vnderſtanding to little ones, openeth the ſenſes of pure minds, & hideth grace from the curious and proud. Humane reaſon is weake, & may be deceaued, but true faith cannot be deceaued.

5. Al reaſon and natural ſearch ought to follow faith, not to goe before it, nor impugne it. For faith & loue do chiefly excel, & worke in a hidden manner in this moſt bleſſed and excellent Sacrament. God, who is euerlaſting, & of infinite power, doth great and inſcrutable thinges in heauen and in earth, & there is no ſearching of his wonderfull workes. If the works of God were ſuch, as might be eaſily comprehended by humane reaſon, they were not to be called wonderfull and vnſpeakable.

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OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

Written in Latine by

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

Canon Regular of the Order of S. Augustine.

REVIEWED AND IN diuers things corrected

By M. C. Confessor to the English Nuns at Paris.

Who also added the Authours life in this last edition.

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TO THE VERIE VENERABLE,
His much honored good Lady

MARIE TREDWAY

FIRST ABBESSE,

OF THE ENGLISH NVNNERY of S. Augustin's Order, in Paris.

And to all the
RELIGIOVS DAMES
her pious and obedient
daughters.

THIS *excellent booke of the* following of Christ, *which was composed* 195. *yeares agoe, by a brother of your owne: though we have served for a present to almost all sorts of people, and in all tongues* (*none, as Sammalius witnesseth,*

after the holy scripture, hauing bene so often reprinted: so often trãslated: so much desired; so frequently read: so highly and generally approued, by persons of euerie ranke) yet in my iugdment it was neuer by better right and title presented to any then to your selues: since it doth not so much need expresse dedication, as of it self without the endeauour of any, it doth addresse it selfe vnto you. For to whom should the Following of Christ belong, but to the Followers of Christ? And whom should we especially esteeme such, but those that imitating the young man in the Gospell, sell all that they haue to follow him? Those that with Abraham forsaking their contrie and friends, sacrifice their Isaac, that is, their self-loue or selfe-will, vpon the Calualrie of a religious life, one of the happie mountaines which God she-

wed vnto them ?

Or who can pretend iuſter title to a rich iewell left by a brother who dyed inteſtate, then legitimate ſurniuing ſiſters ?

Wherfor if any ſtriue to deprine you of title by fathering the worke vpon ſome other Authour; vſe rather Preſcription againſt them, then proces: rather deſpiſe then diſpute their oppoſitions.

Let Caietane, and his followers repute him Authour of ſo famous a booke, who, as it ſhould ſeeme, was not yet reſolued how to write his owne name: vſing three, Gesē, Geſsē, and Gerſen, within ſo many lines.

Let him imagine a man of all the three names (for that there was any ſuch indeed it is verie vncertaine) and then trouble himſelfe in deriuing his pedigree from as many families as the ſuppoſed Authour had names,

and as vnknowen to others, as the Authours name was to himselfe, to witt, Gessen, Gesse, Gessate, there being no such familie in Millan.

Let him be confident that his Authour was cited by S. Bonauenture (who liued long before Thomas a Kempis) in a worke which he neuer made: it nether being found in the Vaticane manuscript; nor in those of Columnia, Sforzia, or any other in any monasterie of S. Francis in Rome: nor yet in those of Bononia and Toloose.

But let Thomas a Kempis his owne word gaine credit with you written with his owne hand, as it is to be seene in the originall manuscript, in S. Martins Monasterie at Louaine, that he wrote this booke in the year 1441.

Let Iohn Busch confirme you in that beliefe who liued in the same age

and place, being onely a myle distant from S. Agnes wher Thomas liued, and wrote in the yeare 1446. some yeares before Thomas departed this life, professing that he writes nothing but what he was an eye and eare witnes of.

Adde to him Trithemius who wrote within 30. yeares after; and absolutly auerrs in his booke of the Eccleſiaſticall writers of Germanie, that your Kempis is the Authour of it.

This doe to God's glorie, and in honour of that Apoſticall Order in which you run ſo well, ſo humbly, ſo ſuccesfully: with ſuch feruour, ſuch alacritie, ſuch ſimplicitie, vnanimitie, peace, and concord. Where Obedience is precisly obſerued, not proudly diſputed: wher ſolide religion is ſubſtantially performed, not voyced, or ſet out with

a glorious outside, which is rather a hold for vaine glorie, then an ornament of religion, or of a religious woman, whose glorie ought to be within, *or if in any exteriour thing*, in her owne infirmitie *onely*, that the riches of Gods mercy *towards her* may more appeare in it. *It is to his honour that I giue testimonie to truth by speaking onely what I dayly heare and see. It is he that I admire and extolle in you, not you in your selues*, who of your selues are nothing: *though* in him that comforts you, *Christ*, you are nothing lesse then they that are *held* aboue measure *perfect. Your tymly vertues outstripe your young yeares: your resolutions belying your sexes, make them appeare manly, yea Angelicall: your performances passe that* which man seeth in you, or heareth of you, *his, I meane,*

not yours, who gaue you both them, and the will to attempt things so heroicall. If I glorie, *you will pardon*, I am not foolish, I tell truth. My mouth is open to *you* deare soules, my hart is dilated, I speake as to my children, *and remaine for euer*.

Yours, though vnworthy,
as Father and seruant.
M. C.

THE LIFE OF THOMAS A KEMPIS, CANON REGVLAR: DRAWEN OVT OF many authours.

THOMAS a Kempis, was borne at Kempis a litle towne in the territories and Dioceſe of Collen, whence alſo he tooke his name. If you behold his parents with a wordly eye, you will nether diſcouer them of

noble bleud, nor remarkable wealth; for all their nobilitie was pietie; all their reuenues honestie of life. They gayned their bread with the labour of their hands, and in the sweate of their browes, and liued contēt of the little they had.

God blessed their bed with two boyes onely, as far as can be gathered in the distance we liue from that age, to witt, Iohn, and Thomas. Iohn the elder brother, haueing finished his studies at Dauentrie: and by the fauour of Gerard the Greate his acquaintance and familiaritie, being instructed in all good demeanour; and hauing borne many offices in the order of the Canō Regulars of S. Windesems congregation, happily departed this life.

Now Thomas of whom we ſpeake, was borne about the 1380. yeare of our Lord God: Vrbane the ſixt holding the keyes, and Charles the fourth wealding the ſcepter of the Empire.

After he had paſt his childhood vnder his parents care; and grew vp to be fitt for learning, he was ſent to Dauentrie, the Metrapolitane citie of Tranſiſulana, being as one may gather about 13. yeares old. He was drawen to Dauentrie by the renowne of one Florentius a pious and learned prieſt, and Prefect of the Canon Regulars, whom the frequent troopes of ſtudents which came from thẽce, had made famous. The ſtudies of Artes and Sciences did ſo florish there at that tyme, that it might be ſtiled the Belgike Athenes.

Being arriued at Dauentrie, his firſt care was to inquire for his brother, by whoſe counſell and helpe (for he had but litle or no meanes) he might be directed how to vndertake his ſtudies. And being commended to Mr Florentius (for Gerard the Great deceaſed in the yeare 2384. while our Thomas was but yet foure yeares old) he receaued him with all the humanitie poſſible; prouiding him of lodging, bookes, and liuelihood.

While the youth, who was of a good diſpoſition, and an honeſt countenance, had meanes by this occaſion to be conuerſant amongſt famous men for pietie and learning, who liuing in the companie of Florentius, were adorned with religion, innocencie of life, and ſinceritie of demeanour: he was

ſeaſoned with their manners, with whoſe conuerſation he was delighted: being ſtudious at home: aſſiduous at ſchoole; frequent at church. So that in a few yeares ſpace he made ſuch progreſſe in pietie and learning, as the many bookes, neuer ſufficiently prayſed, written by him, beare teſtimonie. While he liued in the Colledge of the Canon Regulars, whatſoeuer he could gaine by writing (for he was a skilfull pen-man) he putt it all into the common purſe.

He was a great ſeruant of our B. Ladies euen from his childhoode ſaying certaine ſett prayers euery day to her honour. But, as childrēs pietie is alwayes mutable and inconſtant, he began to be cold in this pious cuſtome. So that by litle and litle he neglected and defer-

red his wonted prayers and ſuffrages, firſt to one day; ſoone after to two or three: then to foure: at lēgth to a whole weeke, and in the end, alas, he gaue ouer all. In the tyme of this his coldnes, he had a viſion by night wherin he conceaued himſelf to be, as it were, ſtanding in the hall by his maſter Florentius where, while: with other of his ſchoolfellowes who flocked together to heare the word of God, he attentiuly gaue eare to what was ſaid, the Lady of the world, diſcouered herſelfe vnto him cōming downe from heauen in a cloude and diſcending into the ſaid Hall, where being moſt glorious in her gracious aſpect or contenance, and glitttering in attire, she compaſſed the brothers who preached the word of God to the hearers,

and now imbracing one, now another of them, she seemed to render them thankes, that they endeauoured by wholsome admonition, to effect that the price of her deareſt ſonn's pretious bloud might not perish in thoſe young youthes. But he beholding what paſt; and seeing the Virgine bleſſed amongſt women, imbrace the foreſaid brothers, ſtood burning and ſweatning; melting and hopeing: and turning, and firmely fixing his eyes bige with loue, vpon her, he ſaid in himſelfe, I will a litle expect: that when the bleſſed Virgine ſhall haue ſufficiently giuen the teſtimonies of her loue to the reſt, ſhe may alſo out of her benignitie daigne me with her charitable imbracements; whom, though I could not honour to her worth, yet I

endeauou-

endeauoured it according to my weaknes. But alas, as the firmeſt hopes of mortalls, are oftē anſwered with the contrarie; Thomas hoped for a kiſſe, a ſweet pledge of loue, but in lieu therof he mett with a sharpe reprehēſion. For the B. Virgine, hauing ſolaced all thoſe with deare imbracements, who with their pious admonitions did ſeaſon and ripen the florishing ſpring of the multitude of hopefull young youthes, she turned at length towards Thomas, and caſting a ſeuere and correcting eye vpō him. In vaine, quoth she, doſt thou expect the imbracemēt of ſacred loue: cruell enemy! who vnhappily neglecting my friendshipe, doſt not pay me the wonted and due reuerences of thy feruent prayers. For where are now thy accuſtomed prayers? Whither are

thy daylie deuotions fled? What is now become of thy aſpiratiõs mixed with pious ſighes and teares? Is not charitie waxed cold in thee? Loue drowſie: wonted pietie ſhaken? And yet thou, as though to offend where nothing, ſtandſt audaciouſly expecting imbracemẽts, whoſe actiõs haue earned wroth. And wrothfully withdrawing her countenance: begone, quoth she, begone from me: thou art iudged vnworthy of my imbracements, who neglecteſt to pay ſo eaſie a tribute of prayers to thy beloued. And thus leauing him wounded with sharpe reprehẽſions, inuironed with clouds she diſappeared.

But Thomas awaking out of his viſion examines his conſcience, acknowledges his fault, and promiſes amendmẽt. And leaſt afterwards he might be fruſtrated of

the B. Virgini's imbracements he did in such sort resume his neglected deuotions, that he did not frō that tyme to the verie last periode of his life euer omitt them any more: ô happie reprehension, which was forcible to correct errour; to renew the league of loue which was in some sort violated; and to wipe away the stayne of negligence.

Being now much improued by seauen yeares acquaintance with Mr. Florentius and the rest of the bretheren, and hauing tryed himselfe in all the parts and points of all the vertues, he was inflamed with a desire of Religiō, the sparkes or seedes wherof Mr Florentius had cast into his soule. Wherfore in the yeares 1400 in which yeare Florentius afterwards dyed, our Thomas be-

tooke himselfe to the holy mountaine of S. Agnes, situated a litle aboue the Cine of swollen, where, vpon the edge of the riuer Vidrũ, there was a monasterie lately begun of Canon Regulars, who liued vnder S. Auguſtins Rule and habit. This house was as yet (as the beginnings off all things are wont to be litle and difficult) verie obscure, being hardly knowen, and rarely frequented by any. When he came thither with commendatorie lettres from Florentius, he was verie courteously receaued of his owne brother, who was the first Priour of the said Monasterie; and both of them broke out into that heauenly acknowledgment: *how good and pleasant a thinge it is for brother to dwell together.*

Now this candidate of religion, though he wonderfull feruently

desired to enter into it: yet least he might doe any thing too hastily or rashly, he moderated his feruour by a cõsiderate delay, which alone brings forth prudence. And therfor after he had spent 6. yeares in the nature of a scholler or prentise, the sixt yeare he receaued the habit, and at the end of the seauenth, he was solemnely professed. He did shine with a maruellous pietie towards God: obediẽce and obseruãce towards Superiours: loue and good will towards his fellow-brothers. He neuer gaue way to idlenes, the source of all mischiefe: but was continually imployed, ether in reading holy scriptures, transcribing them for the common vse; or in composing sõthing of his owne: wherin he did frequently spend what rested of the night after matins,

yea euen with damage to his bodily health, to th'end he might oblige all true louers of vertue.

The whole Bible deuided into foure tomes; a mightie faire masse-booke, and sundrie of S. Bernards, opuscules, or litle workes, are extant to this day, written by him most artificially, and industriously in an excellent hand.

It is hard to expresse how present he was to himselfe, and how reuerētly he performed the office of the Church, and all functions therto belonging.

While he sung the Psalmes, his aspect was alwayes turned toward the heauens inspired with feruent zeale, and taken with the incredible sweetnes of the Psalmes he was obserued to be rauished out of himselfe in an extasie, so that oftentymes he did not stand on

the ground with his heeles, but with his tip-toes onely touched it, striuing to flie into heauen with the rest of his body, wher he was already in hart and desire. In singing he stood alwayes straight vp, without euer leaning, ether with backe, or arme vpon his seate.

He was alwayes, day and night, the first that entred, and last that wēt out of the Church. The worshipe of God, and the comlines of his house, did wōderfully delight, and dilate his hart.

So that while vpon a tyme one said merrily vnto him, that he apprehended him happie indeed, and yet not much to be admired, that he sung the Psalmes with such alacritie of voice, and prōptitude and pietie of mind; since Dauids Psalmes were as sauorie to him, as danitie samon; It is,

that is be to God, as thou sayest, replyed he, *Psalmi mihi Salmones*, which yet are tedious and loathsome to those that are not present, and attentiue to what they sing: but spare their breastes and voices.

All his discourse was of God, and the holy scripture. When he chanced to be in the compagnie of graue and learned persons, who spoke of court businesses, and wordly affaires, he satt as dum, and ignorāt of all the things wherof they treated, not answering euen when he was demanded, vnlesse he were inuited thervnto by some remarkable and apparent good. Marrie if there were speach of God, and heauenly things, being demanded his opinion, he spoke, or rather wordes flowed from him, as continued

brookes sweetly gliding from a cleare cristall fountaine. When he was desired to preach extemporally, so he could discouer any ones profit in it, he neuer refused: which yet he would not doe, till he had first premeditated for a smale space, or tooke a short nappe. He had such a facultie and facilitie in preaching, that verie many moued by the fame therof, flocked to the mount of S. Agnes out of the neighbouring townes and places more remote, with a greedines to heare him.

His companions did not least admire his resolute sufferance, in ioyfully bearing aduersities: his patience, not onely in easily tolerating but also benignly excusing other mens faultes. His sobrietie in all kindes; puritie of life, and modestie; his care and

diligence to aduance the profite of the communitie: his earneſt endeuour to ſee the Church beautified and adorned: his burning zeale as well as frequencie in his prayers: his teares plentifully powered out, and other moſt pregnant proofes of ſolide pietie. In fine he had conceaued ſo abſolute and inward a hatred of all worldly vanities, and allurements: and ſo holy a neglect of all tranſitorie things, that he lothed to learne the vſuall names by which they were called.

And leaſt while he preached well to others, his body which doth aggrauate the ſoule might haue led him captiue to ſin, and he haue become a reprobate, he chaſtiſed his body and brought it into captiuitie, diſcipliming himſelfe with a whipe certaine dayes

in the weeke; singing in the interim *stetit Iesus.*

He was so wedded to the reading of the holy scriptures, and to his celle, that he often both spoke and wrote this saying. *I haue sought rest in all things: yet neuer found it nisi in angellis & libellis*, that is, in retirednes and reading.

He was so affable and milde, that though he desired much to flie it, yet was he chosen Subprior enen in the flowre of his age, by common suffrage. After that he was made Prefect of the economie, or Procuratour of the house, because he seemed to be addicted to almes deedes, with which charge though he diligently complied; yet, because it hindred him from his pious contemplation, and writing of bookes, he was restored to his former office.

It happened often that while he conuerſed and diſcourſed amõgſt his brethren, he perceaued God manifeſtly ſpeake interiourly to his hart; therfore modeſtly taking an excuſe as though he were expected by ſome, he repaired to his chamber: where powreing out his hart before God, he drunke vp that wiſdome, which all deuoute people admire in his moſt excellent bookes.

Our gracious Lord did alſo honour his ſeruant with a heauenly viſion: For while he went from the Mount of S. Agnes to viſite Iohn Heuſden Prior who lay ſicke at Windeſem, whether vpon courteſie, or occaſion; and conſulting with him about ſome buſines appertayning to religion, lodged there that night: He ſaw in the dawning of the day certaine ref-

plendant troopes of bleſſed ſpirits running with nimble feete as though they haſtened to ſome great mans funerall, to conuoy his happie ſoule to their heauẽly reſt. The truth which he ſaw, was made good by what he heard: for being wakened by the noyſe of the table he leepes out of bed, and hauing ſome ſenſe of what was to happẽ, he foretold the death of the Priot of Windeſem.

He learned by experience to deſpiſe the Diuells dreadfulnes and herrour. For when, vpõ a certaine tyme, that foule beaſte ſtood about him in a moſt vglie and horred shape, and made towards his bed, he quaked at the firſt approch of that hideous aſpect, not knowing at what defence to put himſelfe againſt the guile of the dreadfull enemy of mankind. At

length encouraged by the holy Ghost, he begā as well as he could the Angelicall salutation, or aue Marie, with a trembling voice, as one in feare; But the diuell, as though he had not bene moued at all with that salutation, drew neerer and neerer vnto him quaking with feare, till he cryed out *Iesus Christus Amen.* Whervpon the diuell hearing that terrible name, struke, as it were with a dreadfull thunder-bolt, turnd away his horrid countenance, and fled away with speed. Thomas therfore obseruing that the Diuell durst not stand against the vertue of so powerfull a name, resumed courrage, raysed his panting heart, and with iterated cryes prosecuted his flying enemy with the blessed name of *Iesus Christ.* And euer as he redoubled his cryes: the foule fiēdre-

doubled his speed. The blessed mā obseruing this, rēdred thankes to God, and said in himself: If by this most holy name, *Iesus*, I be able to breake downe and vanquish the power of darknes, I will no more, as hertofore I haue done, ether feare their machinations, or through weaknes of faith, shake vnder their dreadfull minaces.

Yea those other signes and miracles, which in diuers passages he relates were done by the payers of a person whom he names not: were firmly cōceaued to be done by his owne prayers: as that of the recouering of the booke which was lost in the celle, and diuers other things.

He was of a litle more then a midle stature: of a manly shape and countenance: of a liuely browne colour: of a sharpe

strong sight, so that euen to his graue he neuer vsed spectacles.

When he had most commendably, and with great frute to his fellowes, lead a religious life in the Mount of S. Agnes for the space of 71. yeares (counting the fiue yeares which he spent there before he was clothed) he was summoned by his Lord and Sauiour to the Mount of Eternitie, which he had so oft before beheld at distance; so oft breathed after; and his blessed soule freed from her earthly prison, did flit into the eternall tabernacles, there to inioy her God for euer. He dyed the 92. yeare of his age. The 8. of Aug. 1471.

FINIS.

THE

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

The first Booke.

Of the Imitation of Christ, and contempt of all the Vanities of the world.

CHAPT. I.

HE that followeth me, walketh not in darkneſſe, ſaith our Lord. Theſe are the words of Chriſt, by which we are admoniſhed, that we ought to imi-

tate his life, and manners, if we will be partakers of his diuine light, and be deliuered from all blindneſſe of hart. Let therfore our chiefeſt care be to meditate vpon the life of Ieſus Chriſt.

2. The doctrine of Chriſt exceedeth all the doctrine of the Saints: and he that had the light of ſpirit, would diſcouer therin a ſecret & hidden Manna. But it falleth out that many, who often heare the Ghoſpell of Chriſt, do yet feele in themſelues but ſlender motion of any holy deſire, becauſe they are void of the ſpirit of Chriſt. But whoſoeuer wil fully and feelingly vnderſtand the wordes of Chriſt, muſt endeauour to conforme his life wholy to the life of Chriſt.

3. What will it auaile thee, to diſpute profoundly of the

Trinity, if thou be voyd of humilitie, and therby be displeasing to the Trinitie? Highe wordes, surely, make a man neither holy nor iust; but a vertuous life maketh him deare to God. I had rather feele cõpunction, then vnderstand the definition thereof. If thou dideſt knowe the whole Bible by harte, and the sayinges of all the Philoſophers, what would all that profit thee, without charity, and the grace of God? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but only to loue God, & wholy to ſerue him. This is the higheſt wiſedome, by contempt of the worlde, to tend towards the Kingdome of heauen.

4. It is therfore vanity, to ſeeke after fading riches, and to repoſe truſt in them. It is alſo vanity, to gape after honours,

and to climbe to highe degrees. It is vanity to follow the appetites of the flesh, and to labour for that, for which thou must afterwardes suffer more grieuous punishmentes. Vanity it is, to wish to liue long, and to be careleſſe to liue well. It is vanity to minde only this present life, and not to foresee thoſe thinges which are to come. It is vanity to sett thy loue on that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither, where euerlasting ioy is permanent.

5. Call often to minde this prouerbe: That the eye is neuer satisfied with seeing, nor the eare filled with hearing. Endeauour therfore to withdraw thy hart from the affection of visible things, and to turne thy selfe to

their invisible. For they that follow their sensuality, dog staine their owne consciences, & loose the grace of God.

Of the humble conceipt of our selues.

CHAPT. II.

ALl men by nature desire to know: but what auaileth knowledg without the feare of God? Surely an humble husbandman that feareth God, is better then a proud Philosopher that neglecting himself, laboureth to vnderstand the course of the heauens. Who so knoweth himself well, groweth daily more contemptible in his owne conceipt, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I vnderstood all that is to be knowne in

the world and were not in charity, what would that help me in the light of God, who will iudge me according to my deedes?

2. Giue not thy selfe to inordinate desire of knowledg: for therin is much distraction and deceipt. The learned are willing to seeme so to others, and to be accompted wise There be many things, which to know doth little or nothing profit the soule: and he is very vnwise, that bestoweth his labour about other thinges, then those that may auaile him for the health of his soule. Many words do not satisfy the desires of the harte: but a good life comforteth the mind, & a pure conscience giueth great assurance in the sight of God.

3. How much the more thou knowest, and how much the

better thou vnderstandest, so much the more grieuously shalt thou therfore be iudged, vnlesse thy life be also more holy. Be not therfore extolled in thy owne mind for any art or science which thou knowest, but rather let the knowledge giuen thee, make thee more fearefull. If thou thinkest that thou vnderstandest and knowest much, know also, that there be many things more, which thou knowest not. Thinke not too well of thy self, but rather confesse thine ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thy selfe before others, sith there be manie more learned & skilfull in the Law then thou? If thou wilt knowe or learne any thing profitable, desire not to be knowne, but to be little esteemed of by men.

4. The highest & most profitable reading, is the true knowledge and consideration of our selues. It is great wisdome and perfection, to esteeme nothing of our selues, and to thinke alwaies well, and commendably of others. If thou shouldest see another openly sinne, or commit any heynous offence, yet ought'st thou not to esteeme the better of thy selfe, for thou knowest not how long thou shalt be able to remaine in good estate. We are all frayle, but thou ought'st to esteeme none more frayle then thy selfe.

Of the doctrine of truth.

CHAPT. III.

HAppy is he whom Truth by it selfe doth teach, not

by figures, and voices that passe away; but as it is in it selfe. Our owne opinion and sense doth often deceaue vs, and it discernes little. What auaileth it to dispute and contend about darke and hidden things, wheras for being ignorant of them, we shal not so much as once be reprehended at the day of iudgment? It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and giue our minds to that which is curious and hurtfull: we haue eyes and doe not see.

2. And what haue we to do with the termes & distinctions of Logitians? He to whom the Eternall Word speaketh, is deliuered from multitudes and diuersities of opinions. By that one Word al thinges do speake, and all declare the same: and this

is the beginning, and that which speaketh vnto vs. No man without that Word, vnderstandeth or iudgeth rightly. He to whom all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may enioy a quiet mind, and remaine peaceable in God. O God, the eternall Truth, make me one with thee in euerlasting charity. It is tedious to me often to read & heare many things. In thee is all that I would haue, and can desire. Let all Doctours hold their peace: let all creatures be silent in thy sight: speak thou alone vnto me.

3. How much the more one is retired within himselfe, and becommeth inwardly sincere, and pure: so much the more, and higher mysteries doth he vnderstand without labour: for that he

receaueth light of vnderstanding from aboue. A pure, sincere and stayed spirit, is not distracted, though he be imploied in many workes: for that he worketh all to the honour of God, and laboureth for inwarde tranquility, without seeking himselfe in any thing he doth. Who hinders and troubles thee more, then the vnmortified desires of thine owne harte? A good and deuout man, first of all disposeth in himselfe his outward works: neither do they draw him to the desires of an inordinate inclination, but he ordereth them to the prescript of reason. Who hath a greater combate, then he that laboureth to ouercom himself? This ought to be out endeauour, to conquer our selues daily, to wax stronger, and be more able to subdue our

passions, and alwaies in this way to get some ground.

4. All perfection in this life, hath some imperfections mixt with it: and no knowledge of ours is voide of darknesse, and ignorance. An humble knowledg of thy selfe is a more secure way to God, then a deepe search after learning: yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the only knowledg of any thing whatsoever is to be disliked, it being good in it selfe, and ordained by God: but a good conscience, and a vertuous life, is to be preferred before it. And for that many endeauour, rather to gett knowledg, then to liue well, therfore they are often deceiued, and reape either none, or very slender profit of their labours.

5. O if men bestowed as

much labour in the rooting out of vices, & planting of vertues, as they doe in mouing doubts & questions, neither would there so much hurt be done, nor so great scandall be giuen in the world, nor so much loosnes be practised in places erected for vertue? Truly at the day of Iudgment, we shall not be examined what we haue redd, but what we haue done: nor how well we haue spoken, but how vertuously we haue liued. Tell me now, where are all those great Doctours and Maisters, with whom thou was so well acquainted, whilst they liued and flourished in learning? Now others possesse their liuings, & perhaps do scarce euer thinke of them. In their life time they seemed something, and now they are not spoken of.

6. O, how quickly doth the glory of this world passe away! Would God their life had bene answerable to their learning, then had their study and reading bene to good purpose. How many perish in this world by reason of vaine learning, who take little care of the seruice of God? And because they rather choose to be great then humble: therfore they vanish away in their owne thoughts. He is truly great that is great in charity. He is truly great, that is little in himselfe, and that maketh no accompt of the hight of honour. He is truly wise, that accompteth all earthly thinges as dung, that he may gaine Christ. And he is truly learned, that fulfilleth the will of Christ, and forsaketh his owne.

Of

Of Prudence, and Foresight in our actions.

CHAPT. IV.

WE must not giue eare to euery suggestion or instinct, but ought warily, & leasurely to ponder things according to the will of God. But (alas) such is our weakenesse, that wee rather often beleeue, and speake euill of others, then good. Those that are perfectly vertuous, do not easily giue credit to euery thing that is told them, for they know that humane frailty is prone to euill, and very subiect to faile in words.

2. It is great wisdome not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stifly in thine owne

conceipts; as alſo not to beleeue euery thing which thou heareſt: nor preſently to relate againe to others, what thou haſt heard, or doſt beleeue. Conſult with him that is wiſe and of a good conſcience, and ſeeke to be inſtructed by a better then thy ſelfe, rather then to follow thine owne inuentions. A good life maketh a man wiſe according to God, & giueth him experience in many things. How much the humbler one is in himſef, & more ſubiect & reſigned vnto God: ſo much the more prudent ſhall he be in all his affaires, and enioy greater peace and quiet of hart.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

CHAPT. V.

TRuth, not eloquence, is to be sought for in holy Scriptures. Each part of them is to be read with the same spirit it was made. We should rather search after spirituall profit in Scriptures, then subtility of speach. We ought to read deuout and simple bookes, as willingly as high and learned. Let not the reputation of the writer offend thee, whether he be of great or small learning: but let the pure word of truth moue thee to read. Search not who speakes this, or that, but marke what is spoken.

2. Men passe away, but the truth of our Lord remaineth for

By

euer. God speaketh vnto vs sundry waies, without respect of persons. Our owne curiosity often hindreth vs in reading of the Scriptures, when as we will examine, and discusse that which we should rather passe ouer without more adoe. If thou desire to reape profit, read humbly, plainly, and faithfully: neuer desire the estimation of learning. Inquire willingly, & heare with silence the words of holy men: dislike not the Parables of Elders, for they are not recounted without cause.

Of inordinate Desires, and Affections.

CHAPT. VI.

Whensoeuer a man desireth any thing inordinatly, he is

presently disquieted in himself. The proud and couetous can neuer rest. The poore and humble in spirit, liue together in all peace. The man that is not wholy dead in himselfe, is quickly tempted, and ouercome in small and trifling thinges. The weake in spirit, and he that is yet in a maner subiect to his appetites, and prone to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himselfe altogether from earthly desires. And therfore he is often afflicted, when he goeth about to retire himselfe from thē: and easily falleth into indignation, when any opposition is made against him.

2. And if he hath followed therin his appetite, he is presently disquieted with remorse of conscience, for that he yielded to his passion, which profiteth

him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for. True quiet of minde therfore, is gotte by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the hart of a carnall man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spiritual and feruent.

Of flying vaine Hope, & Pride.

CHAPT. VII.

HE is vaine that putteth his trust in men, or creatures. Be not ashamed to serue others, for the loue of Iesus Christ: nor to be esteemed poore in this world. Presume not vpon thy selfe, but place thy hope in God. Doe what lieth in thy power, and God will assist thee. Trust

not in thine owne knowledg, nor in the wisdome or prudence of any liuing creature, but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the presumptuous and proud.

2. Glorie not in wealth, if thou haue it; nor in the power of thy friends, but in God, who giueth all things, and aboue all desireth to giue thee himself. Extoll not thy selfe for the stature, and beautie of thy body, which is dissolued, and disfigured with euery little sicknes. Take not pleasure in thy naturall gifts, or witt, least thereby thou displease God, to whom appertaineth all the good whatsoeuer nature hath giuen thee.

3. Esteeme not thy selfe better then others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who know-

eth what is in man, thou be accompted worse then they. Be not proud of thy good workes, for the iudgments of God are farre different from the iudgments of men, & that often offendeth him, which pleaseth them. If there be any good in thee, beleeue that there is much more in others, that so thou maiest the better keep within thy hart the precious treasure of humility. It is no preiudice vnto thee, to esteeme thy selfe worse then all the world: but it hurteth thee very much, to prefere thy selfe before any one. The humble enioy continuall peace but in the hart of the proud, is enuy and often indignation.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

CHAPT. VIII.

LAy not thy hart open to euery one: but treate of thy affaires with the wise, and such as feare God. Conuerse not much with young people, and strangers. Flatter not the rich; neither do thou appeare willingly before great personages. Keepe company with the humble, simple, deuout, and vertuous; and confer with them of those things, that may edify. Be not familiar with any woman, but in general commend all good women to God. Desire to be familiar with God alone, and his Angells, and fly the knowledge of men.

1. We must haue charity towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that the fame of some person that is vnknowne, is much esteemed; whose presence notwithstandinge is not grateful to the eies of the beholders. We thinke sometimes to please others by our company, and we rather distast them with our disordered manners, and the euill customes which they discouer in vs.

Of Obedience, and Subiection.

CHAPT. IX.

IT is a great matter to liue in Obedience, to be vnder a Superiour, and not to be at our owne disposition. It is much sa-

fer to liue in the state of subiection, then of gouernement. Many liue vnder Obedience, rather for necessity, then for charity: and such are discontented, and do easily repine & murmure. Neither can they attaine to freedome of mind, vnlesse they willingly and hartily put themselues vnder Obedience for the loue of God. Go whither thou wilt, thou shalt find no rest, but in humble subiection vnder the gouernment of a Superiour. The imagination and change of places, haue deceiued many.

2. True it is, that euery one willingly doth that which agreeth with his owne sense and liking, and is apt to affect those most, that are of his owne mind: But if God be amongst vs, we must leaue our owne iudgment,

that so peace and sweetnes may be the better preserued. Who is so wise, that he can fully know all thinges? Trust not therefore too much to thine owne conceipts: but be willing to heare the iudgment of others. If that which thou thinkest, be good, and notwithstanding dost leaue it for God, and followest the opinion of another, it shal be better for thee.

3. I haue often heard, that it is more secure to heare and take counsell, then to giue it. It may also fall out, that each ones opinion may be good; but to refuse to yeelde to others, when as reason, or cause requireth it, is a token of wilfullnes and pride.

Of the auoyding superfluity of wordes.

CHAPT. X.

FLy the vnquietnes of men as much as thou canst, for the talke of worldly affaires hindreth very much, although they be recounted with sincere intention: for we are quickly defiled, and as it were enthralled with vanity. I could wish that I had often times held my peace, when I haue spoken: and that I had not bene in company. Why do we so willingly speake, and talke with one another, when notwithstanding we seldom returne to silence, without hurt of conscience? The cause wherfore we so willingly talke, is, for that

by discoursing one with another, we seek to receaue comfort one of another, & desire to ease our mind, ouer wearied with sundry thoughts: and we talke willinglie, and thinke of those thinges which we loue best, and most desire; or of those, which we feele most contrary vnto vs.

2. But alas, often times in vaine, and to no end: for, this outward comfort, is cause of no small losse of inward, and diuine consolation. Therfore we must watch and pray, least our time passe without any fruit, or profit. If it be lawfull, and expedient for thee to speake, speake those things that may edify. An euill custome, & neglect of our owne good doth very much slacke the raynes to inconsiderate speach: Yet deuout discourses of hea-

uenly things, do greatly further our progresse in spirit, especially where persons of one minde and spirit be gathered together in God.

Of the obteyning of peace, and zeale of spirituall profit.

CHAP. XI.

We might enioy peace, if we would not busie our selues with the words and deedes of other men, which appertaine nothing to our charge. How can he liue long in peace, that thrusteth himself into the cares of others, or that little or seldome recollecteth himselfe within his own breast? Blessed are the simple and pure minds, for they shall enioy much peace.

2. What is the reason, why some of the Saints were so perfect, and contemplatiue? Because they laboured to mortify themselues wholy to earthly desires; and therefore they could with their whole hart, giue themselues to God, and freely attend to their owne affaires. We are too much ledde by our owne passions, and too solicitous for transitory thinges. We also seldome ouercom any one vice perfectly, nor are we inflamed with a feruent desire to profit in spirit: and therfore we remaine cold in deuotion, and full of tepidity.

3. If we were perfectly dead vnto our selues, and not intangled within our owne breasts, then we might also haue some tast of diuine thinges, and feele the sweetnesse of heauenly contem-

temptation. The greateſt, and indeed the whole impediment is, for that we are not free from our paſſions, & diſordered inclinations: neither do we endeuour to enter into the path of perfection, which the Sainres haue walked before vs: and when any ſmall aduerſity befalleth vs, we are too quickly deiected, and turne our ſelues to human comforts.

4. If we endeauoured like men of courage, to ſtand continually in the battaile, ſurely we ſhould feele the fauourable aſſiſtance of God from heauen. For he who giueth vs occaſion to fight, to the ēd we may get the victory, is ready to ſuccour thoſe that fight manfully, and do truſt in his grace. If we eſteeme our progreſſe in Religious life, to conſiſt only in

these exteriour obseruations, our deuotion will quickly be at an end. Let vs set the axe to the roote, that being freed from passions, we may enioy true peace of mind.

5. If euery yeare we would roote out one vice, we should quickly become perfect men. But now often times we perceaue it goeth contrary, & that we were better, and of a more pure conscience at the beginning of our conuersion, then after many yeares of our profession. Our feruour and profit should increase daily; but now it is accompted a great matter, if one can retaine but some part of his first spirit. If we would vse but a little violence in the beginning, then should we be able to performe all things afterwards with ease and ioy of hart.

6. It is a hard matter to leave that to which we are accustomed; but harder to do against our owne will. But if thou dost not overcome little and easy things; how wilt thou overcome harder matters? Resist thy inclination in the first motions, and break off evill customes, least perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty. O, if thou didest consider how much inward peace unto thy selfe, and joy to others thou shouldest procure by demeaning thy selfe well, I suppose thou wouldest be more carefull of thy spirituall profit.

Of the profit of Adversity.

CHAP. XII.

IT is good that we have sometimes crosse and adversities;

hath happened by my permiſſion, that out of many harts, thoughts may be reuealed. I shal iudge the guiltie and the innocent, but by ſecret iudgment I would beforehand try them both.

4. The teſtimony of men oftentimes deceaueth: my iudgement is alwaies true, it shal ſtand, and not be ouerthrowne. It is commonly hidden and ſecret, & not knowne in euery thinge but to few: notwithſtandinge it neuer erreth, neither can it erre, although to the eies of the foolish, it ſeemes not right. Men ought therefore to returne to me in euery iudgment, and not to ſtand in their owne opiſnions. For the iuſt man will not be troubled, whatſoeuer happeneth vnto him

him, he will not [illegible]
ther wil he vainely be glad, if by others he be with reaſon excuſed. For he conſidereth that I am he, that ſearcheth the hart & reines, & do iudg, not according to the outward face, nor humane apparence. For that is oftentimes found culpable in my ſight, that in the iudgement of men is commendable.

5. O Lord my God, the iuſt Iudge, ſtrong and patient, thou knoweſt the frailty and peruerſity of man, be thou my ſtrength, and all my truſt, for mine owne conſcience ſufficeth me not, Thou knoweſt that which I cannot reach vnto, and therefore in euery reprehenſion, I ought to haue ſubmitted my ſelfe, and to

haue borne it patiently: vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I haue fayled herein, & giue me againe grace of greater sufferance. For thy bountifull mercy is more auaylable to me for the obtayning of pardon, then my conceaued iustice, for the defence of my hidden conscience. Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby iustifie my selfe; for if thy mercy be away, no man liuinge shalbe iustified in thy sight.

That all grieuous thinges are to be endured for life euerlasting.

CHAPT. XLVII.

SOnne, let not the paines dismay thee, which thou haste vndertaken for me, neither be

thou discomforted for the tribulations which doe befall thee; but let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in all euents. I am able to reward thee aboue al measure. Thou shalt not longe toile here, nor alwais be oppressed with griefe. Attend a while, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy euils. There will come an houre, when all labour and trouble shall cease. Litle, and short, is all that passeth away with time.

2. Doe as thou doest, labour faithfully in my vineyard, I will be thy reward. Write, reade, sing, mourne, obserue silence, pray, suffer crosses manfully: life euerlasting is worthy of al these, and greater combats. Peace shall come in the day which is known vnto our Lord, and it shall not be day nor night, to wit, of this

time, but euerlasting light, infinite brightnesse, stedfast peace, and secure rest. Then thou shalt not say. who shall deliuer me from the body of this death? nor cry. Woe be vnto me, for that my dwelling in a strange countrey is prolonged! For death shal be throwne downe, and health shall be without decay, no anxiety, but blessed ioy, sweet and glorious company.

3. O if thou hadst seene the euerlasting crowns of the Saints in heauen, and with how great glory they now reioyce, who in times past were contemptible to this world, & esteemed vnworthy of life it selfe; truly thou wouldest presently humble thy selfe euen vnto the earth: and wouldest rather seeke to be vnder the feete of all, then to haue com-

command, so much as ouer one: nether wouldst thou desire pleasant dayes of this life, but rather reioyce to be afflicted for God, & esteeme it thy greatest gaine to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, & didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy hart, how durst thou so much as once to complaine! Are not all painefull labours to be endured for euerlasting life? It is no small matter to loose or to gaine, the Kingedome of heauen. Lift vp thine eyes therfore vnto heauen: behold I and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, do now reioyce, now are cõforted, now are secure, now do rest, & shal remain with me euerlastingly in the Kingdom of my Father.

Of the euerlastinge day, and shortnesse of this life.

CHAPT. XLVIII.

O Most blessed mansion of the heauenly Citty! O most cleare day of Eternity, which night obscureth not, but the lightest truth euer enlightneth: day euer pleasant, euer secure, and neuer changing into contrarie state! O that, that day would once appeare, and all these temporall things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth glisteringe with euerlasting brightnesse, but to those that are Pilgrimes vpon earth, it appeareth only a far off, and as it were through a glasse.

2. The inhabitants of heauen doe know, how ioyfull that

day is: but the banished children of Eue bewaile the bitternes and tediousnes of this. The dayes of this life are short and euill, full of sorrow and anguish, where man is defiled with many sinnes, incumbered with many passions, disquieted with many feares, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errours, worne away with many labours, vexed with temptations, weakned with delights, tormented with want.

3. O when shall these euils be at an end! When shall I be deliuered from the miserable bondage of sin! When shal I thinke, O Lord of thee alone! When shall I perfectly reioyce in thee! When shall I be free from al impediments in true liberty, with-

out all griefe of mind and body! When shall I haue firme peace, peace ſecure, and without trouble, peace within and without, peace euery way aſſured! O good Ieſu, when ſhall I ſtand to behold thee! When ſhall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdome! When wilt thou be vnto me all in all thinges! O when ſhall I be with thee in thy Kingdome, which thou haſt prepared for thy beloued, from before all worldes! I am left a poore and banished man in the land of mine enemies, where there are daily warres, and great misfortunes.

Comfort my banishment, asswage my ſorrowe: for my whole deſire ſendeth vpp ſighes vnto thee. For all is burdenſome to me, whatſoeuer this world offereth for my comfort.

I desire familiarlie to enioy thee, but I cānot attaine vnto it. I would gladly fixe my harte to the thinges of heauen, but temporal cares and vnmortified passions weigh me downe. In mind I would be aboue all things, but to my flesh I am inforced to be subiect against my will. Thus, vnhappy mā that I am, I fight against my self, & am become grieuous to my self, whilst my spirit seeketh after the thinges that are aboue, & my flesh that which is below.

5. O what doe I inwardly suffer, when in mind I consider heauenly things, & presently in my prayers a multitude of fleshly fantasies, present themselues before me! My God, be not farre from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy seruant. Cast forth thy lightning, and disperse them: send

out thy darts, and breake all the fantasies of my enemy. Gather my senses together vnto thee: make me forget the thinges of this world: grant me grace to cast away speedily, the fantasies of vices. Sucour me, ô euerlasting truth, that no vanity may moue me. Come heauenly sweetnesse, and let all impurity fly from thy face. Pardon me also, and mercifully forgiue me as often as in prayer I think vpon any thing els besides thee. I truly confesse, that I am wont to be subiect to many distractions: for oftentimes I am not there, where I doe corporally stād, or sit, but rather there, whither my thoughts doe carry me. Where my thought is, there am I: there is oftentimes my thought, where my affections. That quickly oc-

curreth vnto me, which is naturally delightsome, and by custome pleasing.

6. And for this cause, thou that art truth it selfe, hast plainely said. Where thy treasure is there is also thy hart. If I loue heauen, I willingly thinke of heauenly things. If I loue the world, I reioyce at the felicity of the world, and greeue for the aduersity therof. If I loue the flesh, I imagine oftentimes those thinges that are pleasing to the flesh. If I loue the spirit, I delight to think of spirituall things. For whatsoeuer I loue, thereof doe I willingly speake, and heare, and carry home with me the formes & representations therof. O blessed is that man, that for thee, ô Lord, forsaketh all creatures; that violently resisteth

nature, and out of the feruour of ſpirit, crucifieth the concupiſcences of the flesh: that with a cleare conſcience, he may offer ſincere prayers vnto thee, and be worthy of the company of the angelicall quiers, all earthly things, outwardly and inwardly, being excluded.

Of the deſire of euerlaſting life, & how great rewards are promiſed to thoſe that fight valiantly.

CHAP. XLIX.

SOnne, when thou perceaueſt the deſire of euerlaſting blis to be giuen thee, from aboue, thou deſireſt to depart out of the Tabernacle of this body, that thou maiſt without shaddow of

any interchang behold my light; open thy hart, and receaue this holy inſpiration with thy whole deſire. Giue great thanks to the heauenly goodneſſe, that dealeth with thee ſo fauourably, viſiteth thee mercifully, ſtirreth thee vp feruently, holdeth thee vpp powerfully, leaſt through thine owne weight, thou fall down to the vanities of the earth. Nether doeſt thou obtaine this by thine owne thought or endeauour, but by the only fauour of heauenly grace & diuine bounty, that thou maiſt profit in vertue, and obtaine greater humility, and prepare thy ſelf to future battailes, & endeauour to cleaue vnto me, with the whole affection of thy hart, & ſerue me with a feruent deſire.

2. Sonne, fire often burneth,

but the flame aſcendeth not vp without ſmoke: ſo likwiſe the deſires of ſome men are earneſtly carried to heauenly things, and yet they are not free from temptation of carnall affection: and therfore it is not altogether purely for the honour of God, that which they ſo earneſtly requeſt of him. Such is alſo oftentimes thy deſir, which with ſuch importunity thou preſenteſt vnto me. For that is not pure & perfect, which is infected and defiled with the loue of thine owne proper commodity and intereſt.

3. Aske not that which is delightſome and profitable to thee, but that which is gratefull to me, and appertaineth to my honour, for if thou iudgeſt aright, thou oughteſt to preferre and follow my appointment,

rather then thine owne desire, or any desired thing. I know thy desire, and haue heard thy often grones. Now thou wouldest be in the freedome of the glory of the Sonnes of God: now doth the euerlasting habitation, and the heauenly Country full of ioy, delight thee, but this houre is not yet come: it is yet another time, to witt, of warre, a time of labour and triall. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefest good, but thou canst not attaine it for the present. I am he, saith our Lord, expect vntil the kingdome of God doth come.

4. Thou art yet to be tryed vpon earth, and to be exercised in many thinges. Comfort shall be sometimes giuen thee, but aboundant fulnes therof shall not be graunted. Take courage

therfore, and be constant as wel in doing, as in suffering things contrary to nature. Thou oughtest to put on a new man, and to be changed into another. Thou must oftentimes doe that which thou wouldest not, and leaue vndone that thou wouldest doe. That which is pleasing to others, shall goe well forwards, that which thou wisheſt, shall not speed. That which others say, shall be nothing regarded. Others shall aske, and shall receaue, thou shalt aske and not obtaine.

5. Others shall be great in the praises of men, but of thee there shal be no speach; to others this or that shall be committed, but thou shalt be accompted fit for nothing. At this, nature will somtimes repine, and it is much

if thou endureſt it with ſilence. In theſe and ſuch like, a faithfull ſeruant of our Lord is wont to be tryed, how he can deny & ouercome himſelfe in all things. There is ſcarce any thing, wherein thou haſt ſuch need to mortify thy ſelfe, as in ſeeing & ſuffering thoſe things that are contrary to thy will, eſpecially when that is commãded, which ſemeeth vnto thee inconuenient, or to little purpoſe. And for that thou being placed vnder authority, dareſt not reſiſt a higher power, therfore it ſeemeth hard vnto thee, to walke at the becke of another, & to leaue wholy thine owne opinion.

6. But conſider, Sonne, the fruit of theſe labours, the end neere at hand, and the reward aboue all meaſure, & thou ſhalt

receaue noe griefe thereby, but greate comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that little of thy will which now thou willingly forſakeſt, thou ſhalt alwaies haue thy will in heauen. There thou ſhalt haue al that thou wilt, or canſt deſire: there thou ſhalt enioy all good, without feare of looſing it: there ſhall thy wil be euer one with me; it ſhall deſire nothing, ſtrange or priuate; there noe man ſhall withſtand thee, no man complaine of thee, noe man hinder thee, nothing come againſt thee: but al things deſired ſhal be there together preſent, & delight thy whole deſire, & fulfill it to the higheſt degree: there I will giue thee glory for there-proach which heere thou ſuffe-redſt; a garment of praiſe, for for-mer griefe; for the loweſt place,

a seat of an euerlasting Kingdom: there shall the fruite of obedience appeare, the labour of pennance reioyce, and humble subiection shal be gloriously crowned.

7. Now therfore, bow thy selfe with great humility vnder the hands of all, and regard not who said, or commanded this; but take great heed, that whether thy Superiour, or thy Inferiour, or thine equall require any thing of thee, or doe insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeauour to fulfill it with a sincere intention. Let one seek this, another that, one glory in this, an other in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times: but doe thou neither reioyce in this, nor in that, but in the contempt

of thy selfe, and in my pleasure and honour alone. This art thou to wish, that whether by life or death, God may be alwaies glorified in thee.

How a desolate person, ought to offer himselfe into the hands of God.

CHAPT. L.

LOrd God, Holy Father, thy holy name be now and for euer blessed, because as thou wilt, so is it done, & what thou doest, is good. Let thy seruant reioyce in thee, not in himselfe, nor any thing els, for thou alone, o Lord, art the true gladnesse, thou art my hope and my crowne, thou art my ioy and my honour. What hath thy seruant, but what he hath receaued from thee,

thee, euen Without any desert of his? Thine is all that thou hast giuen, and whatsoeuer thou hast made. I am poore and in labours from my youth: and sometimes my soule is heauy euen vnto teares, sometimes also it is troubled in it selfe, by reason of the passions which rise against her.

2. I desire the ioy of peace, I craue the peace of thy children that are fed by thee in the light of comfort. If thou giue peace, if thou infuse holy ioy, the soule of thy seruant shall be full of heauenly sweetnes, and shal become deuout in thy praise: but if thou withdraw thy selfe (as very often thou art wont) he will not be able to runne the waies of thy commandments, but rather he boweth his knees, and knoc-

keth his breaſt, for that it is not with him, as it was yeſterday, & the day before, when thy light shined vpon his head, & he was protected vnder the shaddow of thy winges, from the temptations which violently aſſaulted him.

3. Orighteous Father, & euer to be prayſed, the houre is come, that thy ſeruant is to be proued! Behold Father, it is fit that in this houre thy ſeruant ſuffer ſomething for thee. O Father worthy of eternall honour, the houre is come, which from al eternity thou dideſt foreknow should come: that for a short tyme thy ſeruāt should outwardly be oppreſſed, but inwardly liue for euer with thee: he should be a little deſpiſed, & humbled, and made as an abiect in the

sight of men, and much afflicted with passions & infirmities, that he may rise againe with thee, in the rising of new light, and be clarified in heauen. Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it, and wilt haue it so: and this is fulfilled which thy selfe hast commanded.

4. It is a grace and a fauour to thy friend to suffer, and to be afflicted in the world for the loue of thee, how often soeuer, & by whomsoeuer thou permittest it to fall vpon him. Without thy counsell and prouidence, and without cause, nothing is is done in earth. It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learne thy righteous iudgements, and cast away all haughtines of hart and presumption. It is profitable to me, that shame

hath couered my face, that I may rather seeke to thee for comfort, then torment. I haue learned also hereby, to dread thy inscrutable iudgement, that afflicteſt the iuſt with the wicked, but not without equity and iuſtice.

5. I giue thee thankes, that thou haſt not ſpared my ſinnes, but haſt worne me away by bitter ſtirpes, inflictinge ſorrowes, and ſendinge greeues, within and without. There is none vnder heauen that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heauenly Phiſitian of ſoules, that ſtrikeſt and healeſt, bringeſt into hell, and draweſt out againe: let thy correction be vpon me, and let thy rod inſtruct me.

6. Behold, beloued Father, I

am in thy hands, I bow my selfe vnder the rod of thy correction: let my neck and shoulders feele the stripes of thy chastisement, that my crookednesse may be conformed to thy wil. Make me a deuout and humble disciple of thine, as thou art wont well to doe, that I may be ready at euerie becke of thy diuine pleasure. I commend my selfe & all mine vnto thee to be corrected. It is better to be rebuked here, then hereafter. Thou knowest all and euerie thinge, and there is nothing hidden in the conscience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before thinges are done, thou knowest that they will happen, and hast no neede that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things, which are done on earth. Thou

knowest what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation is fit for purging the rust of my sinns. Deal with me according to thy desired pleasure, & despise not my sinful life, better & more clearly known to none, then to thee alone.

7. Graunt me, Lord, to know that which is to be knowne, to loue that, which is to be beloued, to praise that, which pleaseth thee most: to esteeme that, which is precious vnto thee, to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight: suffer me not, to iudge according to the sight of the exteriour eies, nor to giue sentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men; but to determine of visible & spiritual things with a true iudgment, & aboue all things euer to search

after thy wil and pleasure.

8. The senses of men are often deceaued in their iudgments, the louers of the world, are also deceaued in louing only visible thinges. What is a man the better, for that he is esteemed great by man? The deceiptful man deceaueth the deceiptful, the vaine the vaine, the blind deceaueth the blind, & one feeble likewise another, whilst he exalteth and praiseth him. For how much euery one is in thy sight, so much he is, and noe more, saith humble S. Francis.

That a man ought to imploy himselfe in workes of humilitie, when force is wanting for higher exercises.

CHAPT. LI.

SOnne, thou art not able alwaies to cõtinue in the feruẽt desire of vertue, nor to persist in the high pitch of contemplation, but thou must sometimes of necessity by reason of originall corruption, descend to inferiour things, and beare the burthen of this corruptible life euen against thy will, and with irksomnes. As thou carriest a mortal body, so thou shalt feele trouble and heauines of hart, Thou oughtest therefore in flesh, oftentimes to bewaile the burthen

of flesh: for that thou canst not alwaies persevere in spirituall exercises, and diuine contemplation.

2. It is then expedient for thee to fly to humble & exteriour works, and to refresh thy selfe with good & vertuous actions, to expect with a firme confidence my comming, and heauenly visitation, to beare patiently thy banishment, and the drinesse of thy mind, till thou bee visited againe by me, and deliuered from all anxiety. For I will make thee forget thy former paines, & enioy inward quietnes. I will lay open before thee, the pleasant fieldes of holy Scripture, that with an enlarged harte, thou maist begin to run the way of my commaundments. And thou shalt say, that the sufferings of

this time are not condigne to the glory to come, that shall be reuealed in vs.

That a man ought to esteeme himselfe vnworthy of comfort, worthy of stripes.

CHAPT. LII.

LOrd, I am not worthy of thy comfort, nor of any spirituall visitation, and therfore thou dealest iustly with me, when thou leauest me poore and desolate. For if I could shed teares like a sea, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort. For (alas) I deserue nothing, but to be scourged and punished, in that I haue grieuously and often offended thee, and sinned in many thinges. Al things therfore due-

ly considered, I am not worthy euen of the least comfort. But thou mild & merciful God, who wilt not that thy workes doe perish, to shew the riches of thy goodnesse in the vessels of mercy, euen beyond his desert, vouchsafest to comfort thy seruant aboue humane measure: for thy comforts are not like to the vaine words of men.

2. What haue I done, o Lord, that thou shouldest impart any heauenly comfort vnto me? I remember not that I haue euer done any good, but haue bene alwaies prone to sinne, and slouthful in my amendment. It is true, and I cannot deny it. If I should say otherwise, thou wouldest stand against me, and there would be none to defend me. What haue I deserued for my sinnes, but hel

and euerlasting fire? I confesse in the truth of my hart, that I am worthy of all scorne and contempt, and it is vnfit that I should be remembred amongst thy deuout seruants. And although I be vnwilling to heare this, yet notwithstanding for the loue of truth, I will lay open my sinnes against my selfe, that I may the better deserue to obtaine thy mercy.

3. What shall I say being guilty, and full of confusion? I can vtter out of my mouth no other worde, but this; I haue sinned, Lord, I haue sinned, haue mercie on me: pardon me, suffer me a little, that I may bewaile my griefe, before I go vnto the land of darknes, & be couered with the shaddow of death. What doest thou require of a guilty

and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite and sorrowfull, & doe humble himselfe for his offences? In true contrition and humblenes of harte, is bred a hope of forgiuenes; a troubled conscience is reconciled againe, grace lost is restored, man is defended from future wrath, and God & the penitent soule, meet together in the holy kisse of peace.

4. Humble contritiō for sinns is an acceptable sacrifice vnto thee o Lord, sauouring much sweeter in thy sight then burning frankincese. This is also the pleasant ointment, which thou wouldest haue powred vpon thy sacred feet, for thou neuer despisest a contrite & humble hart. There, is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of our enemy: there, is amended,

& washed away whatsoeuer vncleanes hath bene elswher gathered, and whatsoeuer is defiled.

That the grace of God is not giuen to those that sauour of earthly things.

CHAPT. LIII.

SOnne, my grace is precious, it suffereth not it selfe to be mingled with externall things, nor earthly comforts. Thou oughtest therfore to cast away al hinderances of grace, if thou desire to receaue the infusion therof. Choose therfore a secret place to thy selfe, loue to liue alone with thy selfe, desire the conuersation of none: but rather powre out deuout praiers vnto God, that thou maist keepe thy

mind compunct, & thy cõscience pure. Esteeme the whole world as nothing: preferre my seruice before all outward thinges: for thou canst not attend vnto me, and be delighted also in transitory vanities. Thou oughtest to sequester thy self from thy acquaintance & friends, & to keep thy mind depriued of al temporall comfort. So the blessed Apostle Peter required, that the faithfull of Christ should keepe themselues as strangers & Pilgrims in this world.

2. O how greate a confidence shall he haue at the houre of death, whom noe affection to any earthly thing detaineth in the world. But the weake minde is not yet capable of so retired a hart; nether doth the fleshly person, vnderstand the freedome of a

recollected mind. Notwithstanding if he wilbe truly spirituall, he ought to renounce as wel that which is farre off as that which is neereſt vnto him, & to beware of no man more then of himſelf. If thou perfectly ouercome thy ſelfe, thou ſhalt with more eaſe ſubdue the reſt. It is a glorious victory to triumph ouer our ſelues, For he that keepeth himſelf ſubiect, in ſuch ſort that his ſenſuality be ſubued to reaſon, & reaſon in al things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerour of himſelfe, and Lord of the world.

3. If thou deſire to mount vnto this height of perfection, thou muſt begin manfully, and ſet the axe to the root, that thou maiſt plucke vp & deſtroy thy hidden and inordinat inclination to thy ſelfe, and vnto all priuate and earthly

earthly good. Of this vice (that man too inordinatly loueth himselfe) almost all dependeth, whatsoeuer is wholy to be ouercome and subdued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquility. But for that few endeauour perfectly to dye vnto themselues, & to forsake themselues wholy, therfore they remaine intangled in themselues, and cannot be lifted vp in spirit aboue themselues; but he that desireth to walke freely with me, it is necessary that he mortifie all his inordinate affections, & not adhoare vnto any creature by priuate loue.

Of the different motions of Nature, and grace.

CHAP. LIV.

SOnne, marke diligently the motions of thine owne nature, and my grace; for in a very contrary and secret manner these are moued, and can hardly be discerned, but by him that is spirituall & inwardly enlightned. All men desire that which is good, & pretend some good in al their words and deedes, and therfore vnder pretence of good, many are deceaued. Nature is deceitful and seduceth, intangleth, and deceaueth many, and alwaies proposeth her selfe for her ende, but grace walketh with great sincerity, & auoideth all shew of

euill, pretendeth not deceipts, but doth all things purely for God, in whom also she finally resteth.

2. Nature will not willingly dy, nor be kept in, nor be euercome, nor be subiect to any, nor be subdued: but grace laboureth to mortify her self, resisteth sensuallity, seeketh to be subiect, is willing to be ouercome, and will not vse her owne liberty: she loueth to be kept vnder discipline, and desireth not to rule any, but alwaies to liue & remaine wholie subiect vnto God; & for God, is readly humbly to bow vnto all men. Nature striueth for her owne commodity, and considereth what profit she may reape by another: but grace considereth not what is profitable and commodious vnto herselfe, but rather what is profitable to ma-

nie. Nature willingly receaueth honour and reuerence: but grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory vnto God.

13. Nature feareth shame and contempt, but grace reioyceth to suffer reproach for the name of Iesus. Nature loueth idlenes, and bodily rest, but grace cannot be idle, but willingly imbraceth labour. Nature seeketh to haue those things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is meane and base: but grace delighteth in plaine and humble things, despiseth not course and meane, nor refuseth to weare that which is old and torne. Nature respecteth the things of this world, reioyceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for losse, is moued with euery little iniurious word: but grace thinketh on that,

which is euerlasting, and cleaueth not to that which fadeth with time; she is not troubled with losse, nor exasperated with iniuries, for that she hath placed her treasure and ioy in heauen, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is couetous, and doth more willingly receaue thē giue, she loueth proper and priuate things; but grace is pittifull and liberall to all, auoydeth singularity, is content with a little, thinketh it happier to giue, then to receaue. Nature inclineth to creatures, yeildeth to her owne flesh, followeth vanities, and, listneth to discourses: but grace draweth vnto God, and seeketh after vertues, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth desires of the flesh, restraineth wandring abroad, blusheth to be seene

in publike. Nature is willing to haue some outward cõfort, wherin she may delight her senses, but grace seeketh comfort in God alone and delighteh aboue al visible things in the highest good.

5. Nature worketh all for her owne gaine and profit, she can doe nothing freely, but for bestowed benefits: she hopeth to obtaine ether that which is equall, or better, ether praise or fauour: and coueteth to haue her workes & gifts much esteemed: but grace seeketh no temporall thinge, nor asketh any other reward for her desertes, then God alone, nor desireth more of temporal necessaries, then what may serue her for the obtaining of euerlasting glory.

6. Nature reioyceth to haue many friendes, and kinsfolkes,

she glorieth in noble birth and descent, pleaseth the powerfull, fawneth vpon the rich, applaudeth those that are like herselfe: but grace loueth her enemies, and is not puffed vp with multitude of friendes, nor esteemeth place or birth, but where it is ioyned with greater vertue, she rather fauoureth the poore, then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent, then the prowerfull, reioyceth in the simple, and respecteth not the deceiptfull. exhorteth euer the good to labour for the better gifts, and by vertue to resemble the Sonne of God. Nature quickly complaineth of any want, and trouble: grace constantly suffereth al kind of need.

7. Nature turneth all thinges to her selfe, striueth and conten-

deth for herſelfe: but grace reduceth all to God, from whence originally they proceed: ſhe aſcribeth no good to her ſelfe, neither doth ſhe arrogãtly preſume of her ſelfe, ſhe contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others, but in euery ſenſe and vnderſtandinge, ſubmitteth her ſelfe vnto the eternall wiſedome, and to the diuine iudgement. Nature coueteth to know ſecrets, and to heare newes, ſhe will appeare abroad, and make proofe of many thinges by the experience of her own ſenſes, ſhe deſireth to be kowne, and to do thoſe things for which ſhe may be praiſed and admired: but grace careth not for hearing newes, nor to vnderſtand curious matters, for that all this ſpringeth from the ancient diſorder of our

corrupt nature, seeing nothing that is newe, is durable vpon earth. She teacheth therefore to restraine the senses, to auoid vaine pleasing & ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of praise and admiration, and of euery thing & euery knowledge, to seeke profitable fruite, and the praise and honour of God: she will not haue her self nor hers publickly praised, but desireth that God should be blessed in his giftes, who of meere charity bestoweth all things.

8. This grace is a supernatural light, and a certaine speciall gift of God, and the proper marke of the elect, and pledge of euerlasting saluation, which lifteth vp a man from earthly basenes, to loue of heauenly things and of a carnall, maketh him a spirituall

to whom all my secrets are open, and who can only perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what it is, wherof aboue all things I stand in most neede, & how poore I am in vertues.

2. Behold I stand before thee, poore and naked, calling for grace, and craving mercy. Refresh this thy hungry and needy creature, giue heate vnto my coldnesse, with the fire of thy loue: giue light vnto my blindnes, with the brightnesse of thy presence. Turne al earthly things vnto me, into bitternesse, all things grieuous and contrary, into patience, all base and created things, into contempt and oblivion. Lift vp my hart to thee in heauen, and suffer me not to wander vpon earth. Be thou only sweet and delightsome vnto me

from henceforth for euermore, for thou only art my meate, & my drinke, my loue & my ioy, my delight & all my good.

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholy inflame, burne, and change me into thee, that I might be made one spirit with thee, by the grace of inward vnion and melting of burning loue! Suffer me not to goe from thee hungry and dry, but deale mercifully with me, as thou hast oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What meruaile if I should be wholy inflamed by thee, and dy in my selfe, sith thou art fire burning and neuer decaying, loue purifying the hart, and inlightening the vnderstanding.

Of burning loue, and vehement desire to receaue Christ.

The voyce of the Disciple.

CHAP. XVII.

VVith great deuotion & burning loue, with most harty affection and feruour I desire to receaue thee, O Lord, as many Saints and deuout persons haue desired thee, when they receaued thy Sacrament, who were most pleasing vnto thee in holinesse of life, and most feruent in deuotion. O my God, my euerlasting loue, my whole good, my happinesse without end, I would gladly receaue with the most vehement desire, & worthy reuerence, that any of the Saints euer had, or could feele.

2. And although I be vnworthy to haue all thoſe feelings of deuotion, yet I offer vnto thee the whole affection of my hart. as if I alon had thoſe moſt ſweet inflamed deſires: yea whatſoeuer alſo a deuout mind can conceaue and deſire, all that, with greateſt reuerence, and moſt inward affection I offer & preſent vnto thee, I wish to deſire nothing to my ſelfe, but freely and moſt willingly to ſacrifice my ſelfe and all I haue vnto thee, my Lord God, my Creatour, and my Redeemer. I deſire to receaue thee this day with ſuch affection, reuerence, praiſe and honour, with ſuch gratitude, worthines, and loue, with ſuch faith, hope, and purity, as thy moſt bleſſed Mother the glorious Virgin Marie receaued, and deſired thee.

when she humbly and deuoutly answered the Angel, who declared vnto her the mystery of thy Incarnation, and sayed: Behold the hand-maid of our Lord, let it be done vnto me according to thy word.

3. And as thy blessed Forerunner, the most excellent amongst the Saints Iohn Baptist, cherfully leaped with ioy of the holy Ghost, whilst he was yet shut vp in his mothers wombe: & afterwards seeing Iesus walking amongst men, humbling himself very much, said with deuout affection: The friend of the Bridegrom that standeth & heareth him, reioyceth witth ioy for the voyce of the Bridegrome: so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires, and to offer my selfe vp to thee with my

whole hart. Wherfore I offer alſo, and preſent vnto thee the ioyes, feruent deſires, exceſſes of mind, ſpirituall illuminations, & heauenly viſions of all deuout harts, with all the vertues and praiſes exerciſed, and to be exerciſed, by all creatures in heauen and earth, for my ſelfe, and all ſuch as are commended to me in prayer, that by all thou maiſt be worthily praiſed, & glorified for euer.

4. Receaue, my Lord God, the affections of my hart, and the deſires of infinite praiſe and thākes, which according to the meaſure of thy vnſpeakable greatneſſe, are due vnto thee. Theſe I yeeld thee, and deſire to yeeld thee euery day and moment: and I doe intreat, and inuite all the heauenly ſpirits, & all thy deuout ſer-

uants, to giue thanks and praiſes together with me.

5. Let all People, Tribes, and Tongues praiſe thee, & magnify thy holy and ſweet name with great ioy, and feruent deuotion, and let all that reuerently and deuoutly celebrate thy moſt high Sacrament, & receaue it with full faith, deſerue to find grace, and mercy at thy hand, and pray humbly for me ſinfull creature. And when they ſhall haue obtained their deſired deuotion and ioyfull vnion, & depart from thy ſacred heauenlie table, well comforted and meruailouſly refreshed, let them vouchſafe to remember my poore and needy ſoule.

That man be not a curious searcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Christ submitting his sense to faith.

The voice of the Disciple.

CHAP. XVIII.

THou oughtest to beware of curious and vnprofitable searching into this most profond Sacrement, if thou wilt not sink into the depth of doubt. He that is a searcher of Maiesty, shalbe appressed by glory, God is able to work more then man can vnderstand. A pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, so he be alwais ready to be taught, and doe endeauour to walke in the sound pathes of the ancient Fathers doctrine.

2. Blessed is that simplicity

that forsaketh the difficulte waies of questions, and goeth on in the plaine and assured path of Gods Commandements. Many haue lost deuotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of vnderstanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not vnderstand, nor cõceaue those things that are vnder thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are aboue thee? Submit thy self to God, & let thy sẽse be subiect to faith, & the light of knowledge shall be giuen thee in that degree as shall be profitable & necessary for thee.

3. Some art grieuously tempted about faith & the Sacrament, but this is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemy. Do not

regarde

regarde nor dispute with thy thoughts, nether doe thou giue answere to the doubts moued by the enemy, but beleeue the words of God, beleue his saints & Prophets, & the wicked Serpent wil fly from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the seruant of God to suffer such things. For he tẽpteth not Infidels & sinners, whõ he already securely possesseth, but he sũdry waies tempreth & vexeth the faithful & deuout.

4. Go forward therfore with a sincere & vndoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with vnfaigned reuerence. And whatsoeuer thou art not able to vnderstand, cõmit securely to Almighty God, God deceaueth thee not: he is deceaued that trusteth too much to himselfe. God walketh with the simple, reuealeth him-

ſelfe to the humble, giueth vnderſtanding to little ones, openeth the ſenſes of pure minds, & hideth grace from the curious and proud. Humane reaſon is weake, & may be deceaued, bnt true faith cannot be deceaued.

5. Al reaſon and natural ſearch ought to follow faith, not to goe before it, nor impugne it. For faith & loue do chiefly excel, & worke in a hidden manner in this moſt bleſſed and excellent Sacrament. God, who is euerlaſting, & of infinite power, doth great and inſcrutable thinges in heauen and in earth, & there is no ſearching of his wonderfull workes. If the works of God were ſuch, as might be eaſily comprehended by humane reaſon, they were not to be called wonderfull and vnſpeakable.

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